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ADVICE
TO
CHRISTIANS;
WITH A
RELIGIOUS JOURNAL.

BY JAMES SMITH, ESQ.



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P R E F A C E .

IT is presumed that the regenerate child of grace will not be offended at any thing contained in the following pages. To such persons only they are dedicated. He who expects to get to heaven by serving God and Mammon, will, on the contrary, find much to conflict with his habits and affections; he will be offended. The author does not pretend to have brought forth any thing new; his great object is to animate the disciple of Christ to more systematic exertion in the strait and narrow road. The work is thought to be adapted to Orthodox Christians of all denominations. All who rely on the atonement for salvation, may safely peruse it. Although many of the rules here recommended may be found in other books, yet it is not believed that they have been brought together with so much order in any other treatise.

The reader will observe that in the Religious Journal which is here submitted, the same subject

is sometimes repeatedly brought under consideration. This is because the same sin was repeatedly committed, and the author found that by writing upon it in conjunction with his prayers, he made a deeper and more permanent impression on his mind, and was thereby enabled to take a firmer stand against the evil complained of.

It is believed that the imperfections of character which are here disclosed, will shield the author from the imputation of vanity in publishing this Journal to the world. It will, undoubtedly, be thought by some, that the journalist had better have kept these matters to himself—but when it is considered that they were already known to the searcher of hearts, to whom we should principally look for grace and favor, the disclosure in question will not be deemed so material.

ADVICE TO CHRISTIANS.

THE repentant sinner is justified by grace. His sins are pardoned; but it remains to purify the heart. This is the work of the Christian during his whole life. To this end he is to watch and pray and strive. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. In the first place, the industrious, the thrifty Christian, like the prudent merchant, is advised to take an account of his stock; to ascertain fairly, candidly, and honestly the state and condition of his heart; and for this purpose he must study Mason on Self-Knowledge, one of the most important books ever written. From this work and by prayer, and by a fair examination of his own heart and affections, he will be able to make out a catalogue of the principal and most important defects of his Christian character, (presuming that he can write). He must now procure a small blank book suitable for his pocket, and in it he must write down (beginning with his most besetting sins) the dark list to which I have alluded. This will occasion no disclosures; they are already known to God, the Great Judge before whose tribunal he is ultimately to appear, and unto whom alone (and not unto men) he should now look for approbation and support. I once saw an appalling catalogue of this description. It was as follows:

Heb. 6.

1.

11.

12.

Pride, Envy, Jealousy, Vanity, Self-Conceit.

Slander, Backbiting, Prejudice, Uncharitableness.

Anger, Resentment, Hatred, Malice.

Want of Fortitude, Ashamed of Christ.

Untruth, Insincerity.

Desire for Wealth, Honor, and Fashionable Life.

Selfishness.

Wasting of Time, Wandering Thoughts.

Coldness, Lukewarmness, Despondency.

A Want of Chastity.

Talking too much.

Impatience, Discontentedness, Capricious Humors, Hasty Opinions.

Hasty Actions, a Perturbed State of the Mind.

A want of Punctuality, Indiscreet Expenditures of Money.

Loose Keeping of Accounts, Contracting of Debts improperly.

Eating too much, Indiscreet Regimen.

Many defects of Christian character are here enumerated. It would hardly seem possible that a child of grace could be so imperfect. But one evidence in his favor is, that he should have ascertained and admitted before God the corruption of his heart to this extent. The impenitent man takes no note of his sins. God is not in all his thoughts. It is indeed a great work which the regenerated child of God has to perform. Should he live many years, it will require his whole life, yes, every day and every moment of that life, to conform himself to the example of his Saviour Christ; but let him take courage, for God is with him. The Holy Spirit has taken up his residence in his heart, and will work in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Supreme love to God should be the earnest and leading desire of his heart. And now it is necessary for him to form another table of Christian qualifications which he will in like manner write down in his book. It will be made up as follows :

1. Supreme Love to God and universal benevolence to men.

2. Humility, Lowliness of Mind, Meekness.

3. Purenness of Heart, Truth, Justice, Sincerity, Simplicity, Innocency.

4. Charity.

5. Long Suffering, Patience, Forbearance, Submission.

6. Fortitude, Firmness, Punctuality.

7. Chastity.

8. Composure of Spirit, Contentedness.

9. Peace, Harmony, Joy, Cheerfulness.

10. Hope.

13. Hospitality, Courtesy.

14. Devotion, Diligence.

15. Unaspiring and Unambitious as to worldly honors and distinctions.

16. Unobtrusive.

The great and constant duty of the disciple of Christ will be, day by day, to look over and to pray over these tables. It is not presumed that the defects of character above enumerated, will be found adapted to every case. Each individual should ascertain what is applicable to himself; and it will be a great consolation to the industrious Christian, as he travels on in the strait and narrow road, to find his imperfections gradually diminishing—his evil affections changing their character. Where selfishness was predominant and roused unholy passions in his breast, the divine spirit of benevolence now soothes the troubled mind. Take courage and fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good will to give you the kingdom. But the Christian must work systematically, he must set about eradicating in detail the evil affections of his heart. Pride may be a besetting sin, the right hand whereby he is offended—let him now pluck it off and cast it from him—let him determine to occupy himself principally in prayer to God to subdue his proud heart. And although he must strive and pray against all the impurities of his nature, yet in an especial manner let him fall down before the throne of grace, and in the name of Jesus ask for lowliness of mind, for an humble and contrite spirit; and while he thus prays and strives, let him write down in his book the operations of his mind on this particular subject. He will find this exercise profitable to his soul. I copy

from the entries of one, whose proud heart was unusually obstinate, the following article :

My pride relates to my talents, to the estimation in which I am held in the world. I am exceedingly jealous on this subject, my feelings are often mortified. Now this is a defect of Christian character against which I ought to strive and pray. This passion of admiration is deeply rooted in the constitution of my mind. As long as I can recollect any thing, these feelings are discoverable : it is probable that my prosperity is owing to them. They are not to be eradicated, but their nature is to be changed : the same energies are to be turned into other channels. I am still to improve and advance all the faculties and energies of character that have been given me for all useful purposes, and especially to the end of truth and justice, to the advancement of virtue and the religion of the gospel. But I must cease to regard the estimation of men as of any importance, unless so far as I may gather instruction from it, and as it may serve to regulate and correct my course of justice and humanity. In regard to the worth of worldly importance, it is entirely fallacious ! It is certainly injurious in most cases, it requires additional watchfulness, and is therefore dangerous to the soul. To a person fond of admiration, all temptations are exceedingly dangerous. Such an one should avoid every situation which may lead to false pride or consequence. To have influence, and to be elected to an office which one's merits have not spontaneously called for, and which is not held with the sole object of doing good, is decidedly wrong.

Let my only desire be to serve God and man in the most useful manner without any selfish motive.

In looking back upon my past life I see many errors, but all that I ought to regret, or to be mortified at, is the actual commission of sin. I am not, however, sensible of this sorrow to a sufficient extent, but I am extremely jealous lest I should not be held in much estimation by men. There is something wrong in my heart in this respect, and it is an old disease, it is deeply rooted. Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death !

O that God would enable me to purge my heart of this sin. I do knock at the door, Lord God open to me. I feel that I am a great sinner in this respect. O that God, for Christ's sake, would heal my infirmities !

O that I could at last submit
At Jesus' feet to lay it down,
To lay my soul at Jesus' feet !

The following positions are true :

1st. That this state of the affections is wrong in the sight of God.

2d. It is productive of unhappiness to me.

3d. It impedes my progress in the divine life.

4th. I ought to be contented with myself as I have been created by my Maker. He knew what was best for me, and has given me the faculties that are most for my eternal happiness. It is my duty to improve them.

5th. I must be satisfied with the lot which divine wisdom has apportioned to me ; and if I have been denied any thing, let me consider that it is the hand of God.

6th. Let me hereafter only be anxious to improve and to grow in grace.

7th. When I think I have not had as much respect or deference shown to me as I merit, let me reflect and say, this is the providence of God, it is he that is moulding and fashioning my heart, and for that purpose disposes the minds of my fellows towards me. Certainly I do not merit even as much as I receive. It is God's hand, let me not repine at it.

O thou great and eternal God ! give all my talents, my energies, and my affections a holy and righteous direction, that they may be useful according to thy holy will, and that they may not hereafter serve any unholy purposes or minister to any unlawful desires.

When I am accused of having done wrong, and have incurred the displeasure of my friends or neighbors, let me at once refer the matter to God ; and if my conscience condemns me, let me repent towards God, and seek the forgiveness of my fellows, by acknowledging my errors and making amends. If,

on the contrary, God approves of what I have done, let me cease to be troubled, but demean myself with gentleness and humanity towards them.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting. This I have fully verified ; I am too apt in prosperity to lose my just ballast, and to wander in the unprofitable atmosphere of the world.

Oh ! Heavenly Father, enable me to resist these temptations, and to turn all my temporal vexations and afflictions to my spiritual advantage.

Wealth, and reputation for great talents, are both injurious to the soul : they call for more watchfulness. They feed our pride and vanity ; they lead us into temptation, and are therefore deprecated by our Lord's prayer.

No one ought to doubt this ; and since the soul is of infinitely more consequence than the body, what is calculated to injure it should be avoided as the most deadly poison.

All the little mortifications of this life, with its disappointments and vexations, (when properly treated,) are highly beneficial in a spiritual point of view.

Every observation of another calculated to vex me, and every disrespect for my opinion or talents, and every act which wounds my feelings, should be turned to my everlasting benefit.

I have felt that my professional pride, or the estimation in which I have held my talents, has been my besetting sin. It is, in Scripture language, my right hand which has offended me, and shall I not cut it off and cast it from me ? The sin does not consist in the possession of those talents whatever they may be, but in the pride of opinion which I have entertained. It is not required that I should stultify myself, but that I should be stripped of all self-importance.

I pray God, for Christ's sake, to give me wisdom to accomplish this desirable object, so that I may become as unassuming, and unambitious as a little child.

God condemns me for this pride, and I feel desirous of purging my heart and affections from it.

I shall be fed and clothed. I need feel no anxiety on the

subject of professional reputation. Let me be any thing good, but desire nothing.

Let me consider that both my happiness here and hereafter depend on my successful efforts in this blessed work.

Let me withdraw myself from all competition and strife, and recollect that the kingdom of Christ, of which I desire to be a subject, is not of this world.

Doctor Mason failed in his efforts to put forth a great sermon, and was wonderfully mortified. He however imputed it to the hand of God sent for the purpose of wounding his cursed pride, as he expressed himself.

It is necessary for me to avoid every description of flattery, and not to suffer myself to be too much in the company of inferiors, as the pride of superiority will else be rising up.

Every species of commendation, and especially in cases where I may have deserved praise, is dangerous to me. It is better for me, in a religious point of view, to be in the society of men who will wound my pride, or to contemplate men who outrank me in wealth and talents, and who are disposed to show their superiority over me.

I have reason to bless God, and I will bless him, that such means have much contributed to my little stock of humility. Let me improve this virtue with as much frugality as a miser saves his pence.

Humility in the sight of God is a most sublime virtue.

I am nought but filth and sin. In twenty years probably I may be mouldering in the dust. I am mere dust and ashes, and so are all men living; their self-consequence, or even the importance that the world gives them, is all idle and fallacious. I have indeed nothing but what I have received from the hand of God; and how ungrateful to him to be proud, or to covet the respectful attention of men, when I am forbidden by God so to do. O that God would give me the spirit of self-abasement! Humble thyself (says the word) and thou shalt be exalted.

It is a great injury to be flattered, or to be highly commended of men: a poor weak mortal is sure to forget him-

self, and to imagine that he is of some importance. The man, whose vanity is thus flattered, is deservedly an object of pity. All defects are good to make us humble.

A desire to be thought of consequence is very injurious to the happiness of men in this world : it makes them suspicious and envious : it keeps the mind ever on the alert, and thus it is that vice punishes itself. God visits this spirit of pride with a just punishment. " Shun the observation and applause of men, looking only unto him who seeth every thought of our hearts, and every secret motive of our action. The meek man, having no ambition, no spirit of competition, he feels no pain from disappointment, no mortification from defeat. Having a very humble opinion of himself, he sees others succeed without uneasiness, without envy : by bending under the storms that assail him, he greatly mitigates their violence. Content and satisfied with his lot, he passes quietly and silently through the crowds that surround him. Humility is but speaking truth, and all pride is a lie."

Envy. Envy, the sister of Pride, is a foul affection which continually punishes itself; it is nourished and supported by Pride; when the latter is subdued, its sister attendant disappears. While the Christian is engaged with his proud heart, he will find his envious affections constantly rising up. He should also write down in his book the operations of his mind in this respect. I copy for his instruction (the observations of a fellow traveller to eternity) the following article :

I must not envy, 1st, because God forbids it, and therefore, if I love God, I must obey his commandments.

2d. It is productive of evil in its consequences.

3d. Because it does not advance our desires for preferment. It rather retards them.

4th. It renders me extremely unhappy, and punishes itself on the spot.

5th. We are rendered thereby unworthy of both God and man. We are unworthy of God, because we commit sin in his sight, and we are unworthy of man, because we are guilty of an unmanly passion and low, degrading offence.

We are sinning against man, because we are desirous of reducing him to our own level.

God has placed it in our power by industry to become whatever our talents entitle us to be.

Shall we be indolent and then envy the industrious ? Shall we neglect to improve what God has given us, and then do our fellow men a wrong because of our neglect and sloth ? This is indeed a character that God must condemn and man abhor.

The Christian must wish well to all mankind ; he must not envy or detract from any ; he must be truly humble and meek and gentle. An envious man cannot be humble, and emulation is for the most part a species of rivalry or contention, and is in general a desire to excel for Pride's sake, and is therefore to be condemned.

Wilberforce has this idea, that a man should endeavor to become eminent in real worth and virtue, such as will constrain his fellow men to admire and approve of his attainments, and prefer him to another. But if he desire this for the sake of pride, it is sinful. The correct idea seems to be to deserve, but not to desire the approbation of men.

Then, O Heavenly Father, enable me to pursue my lawful occupation, not only with pure and just principles, but with care and industry, so that I may constantly receive thy divine encouragement and support. I pray God that I may at all times hear professional men extolled without any feeling of envy or uneasiness, and that my unclean heart may be subdued and cleansed.

Shall I indulge evil in my heart while I profess to be a follower of Christ ? God forbid it. Let me then pursue the even tenor of my way, continually referring every thing to God, and walking before him blameless. It is a bad propensity in a popular assembly for any one to desire to be prominent, or to push one's self forward to fill the place of honor. All such feelings are sinful and devilish.

When I am unfaithful to God and have not the spirit of Christian humility and meekness, then I feel the diabolical

spirit of envy, and it regards as well the talents as the wealth and reputation of others. These sinful affections are a sure indication that I have not subdued my corrupt nature by walking closely with God.

These are the lusts of the flesh which are warring against the Spirit.

Considering all my imperfections, and the numerous errors of my life, I have very little reason to be proud or to claim the respectful attention of men.

I am not entitled to the respectful attention of men either from my talents or my virtues.

Men ought not to be mistaken in regard to these things, and therefore, as a just man, I ought not to expect this distinction. All that I should aim at is not to bring disrepute on the cause of Christ. O that God, for Christ's sake, would endow me with more *humility* !

When I feel mortified or jealous of the attention of men either to myself or my family, I ought to ask what indignities did not my Saviour Christ submit to ? He was meek and lowly ; he even washed the feet of some poor fishermen, (being his disciples) ; he desired not the honors of the world ; he was not mortified when they were withheld from him ; when he was reviled, he reviled not again.

These honors are not only not desirable, but they would be absolutely prejudicial to me.

I am striving to be a follower of Christ ; the very fact of my coveting these attentions, or feeling any uneasiness on the subject, is an evidence that all is not right within.

I trust these little mortifications are sent upon me as tests to show that the work of God is not yet finished in my heart.

I will lay low at the feet of Jesus. I will beseech God, for Christ's sake, to purge my heart of this uncleanness.

I will seek the approbation of Christ my Saviour.

I must withdraw myself from all competition, strife, and

emulation. I must not aim to be superior or even equal to my neighbour in any thing, but in all my doings I must have a single eye to the glory of God. My duty towards God must be so entirely transcendent above every other consideration, that when this is clearly ascertained, my course is no longer doubtful.

To hear evil spoken of my fellow men with pleasure, is an alarming symptom of the heart.

Oh, God ! give me grace to eschew this diabolical feeling ; it arises from envy, that mean, unmanly passion. Great God ! deliver me from it, for Christ's sake. O supplant it in my heart, and let holy love and universal benevolence be substituted in its place. I ask it through my Redeemer Christ.

It is the bitter remains of sin. O cleanse my heart from it.

Let me cease to love or desire worldly goods, or worldly importance, and I shall not envy others the possession of them.

Let me carefully avoid every temptation which may dissipate my mind, and seduce me to sin. May the world and its pleasures lose their charms, and its vanities become tasteless to me.

Let the Christian continue his special efforts in respect to these sins, until, with the blessing of God, he has broken them down and swept them out of his heart. Fear not ; they will yield to the efficacy of prayer. While you pray, however, watch against sin, for God will not hear you if you indulge evil in your heart. When these evil affections have been conquered, strike them from your catalogue, and bless God that you are gaining ground. I need not admonish you to bless God on this occasion ; you cannot help doing it ; you will do it with a glow of gratitude that the sinner never felt ; it will create such a foretaste of Heaven in your soul that you will forever cease to doubt, as well of the truth, as of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Secondly : Take up Slander and Backbiting with Prejudice and Uncharitableness. These sins are of a very impure

character ; they are absolutely incompatible with the spirit of Christian benevolence. He that loves all men, contemplates them as brethren ; consequently he is tender and forbearing in regard to their faults. His maxim is not to utter even a slanderous truth, much less a falsehood against another, unless for the sole purpose of doing good. And one ought not, at his peril as a Christian, to speak evil of his neighbor, unless his purpose is clearly benevolent. These sins, therefore, are early, yes, very early to be the subject of anxiety. Do not merely think of them ; let them be your special care ; let them for a time engross your principal attention and earnest prayer to God ; and while you pray set a watch over your tongue, and always remember that if you indulge sin in your heart, God will not hear you. If, therefore, while you pray to be delivered from these most odious vices, you indulge malice in your heart, your prayers will be unavailing. The cleaner the Christian's heart, the greater is the efficacy of his prayers. We have ordinarily no conception of the mighty power of prayer ; it breaks up habits that seem to have the force of second nature ; its blessed effects are unknown to the sinner ; and few indeed are the Christians who avail themselves to a sufficient extent of its divine influence upon the heart. The Christian who is free from the vice of envy rarely slanders, unless it be from a mere idle habit, which is indeed of a most censurable character. While on this subject I cannot refrain from remarking on the want of Christian discrimination in regard to the sinful character of actions. Many Christians, from a mere idle habit and without any good intent, detail and circulate slanderous reports, who at the same time would think it highly sinful to play at chess, whist, or dance for amusement ; and while these are condemned in severe terms, they see no evil in smoking, chewing tobacco, or eating for pleasure ; these habits are expensive, and some of them are offensive to others ; they are, therefore, clearly more reprehensible than games of amusement.

The correct rule is this : If there be nothing in the act which

will prevent me from loving God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, it is not sinful. He that loves his neighbour as himself, will not circulate reports injurious to his character ; nor will he practice a useless, costly habit which will diminish his ability to relieve the poor. We are bound also to keep our minds free from prejudice. Here is much to do. We acquire prejudices from the most trifling circumstances, and we are not always aware of their injurious consequences. Let the Christian be constantly on his guard against this mischievous affection, and pray to God for his protecting grace. Mason on Self-Knowledge contains the following excellent precepts :

“ The human mind is apt to be prejudiced for or against individuals. We are attached from similarity of taste or temper, or something in the address that flatters our vanity, or something in their humor that hits our fancy, or something in their conversation that improves our understanding.

Is our esteem or affection rightly placed ?

As to his evil prejudices, let us consider—

1. His way of thinking, talking or acting, may be juster than my own.

2. He may not have had the same opportunities or advantages of improving his understanding or manners.

3. He may have many other excellencies which I have not.

4. Or he may have greater weaknesses or infirmities of his nature to guard against. I ought not to harbor a dislike to him, but rather to love and pity him.

5. Let me consider whether he really intended to offend me, and whether I do not impute that to ill nature which is only the result of bad manners. Do I not take offence before it is given ? If so, the fault is mine.

6. Did I not provoke him to it ? I ought to have known his pride, passion or peevishness better.

7. How came I in his company ? Have I not myself committed some indiscretion ?

8. Does not my discontent aggravate the evil ?

9. I must forgive if ever I expect to be forgiven."

I must not judge rashly. I am to condemn vice. But where any one professes to be a follower of Christ, and shows some of the fruits of the gospel, I am not to be hasty in my condemnation of such men. Perhaps they have many Christian virtues which I have not.

I must rather speak of what has appeared to be my duty, how my experience has taught me, and what seems to be necessary in my particular case. If any thing is decidedly contrary to the gospel, as appears by the word of God, I am bound so to speak of it.

My imperfections are so great that I shall require every moment that God has given me to conform myself to the blessed example of my Saviour.

Enable me, O God ! to be extremely careful how I judge my fellow beings.

Angry
Passions.

The indulgence of anger is a besetting sin of most Christians. It often betrays them into faults. It sometimes rises up so suddenly that we sin before we have time to reflect. This is clearly a defect of our corrupt nature, which should be subdued with all possible expedition. I never got angry in the whole course of my Christian life, without doing something to be repented of. I certainly never did a prudent act while under the influence of this unholy passion. It has often tarnished my Christian character. It has, with me, been the subject of much grief and much prayer. I witnessed upon one occasion, an angry parent chastising his child with such dreadful severity that the scene was almost insupportable. After ceasing for a moment, he attempted to make a second attack, when the little sufferer, terrified beyond description, prayed for my interposition. I thereupon dissuaded the parent from inflicting any further punishment ; but the fury of his countenance still bespoke the raging of this awful passion. I strongly admonish parents never to correct their children or domestics while under the influence of this passion. "Be

patient, and learn to forego your inclinations when duty requires it," is a sound maxim, under the influence of which the Christian should constantly live. By this rule, and by constant prayer to God, he will undoubtedly be delivered from this most odious sin, with its concomitant vices hatred, and malice.

This is indispensable to the Christian. He cannot resist temptation ; he cannot bear the scoffing, the ignominy, that his character will draw down upon him, without fortitude. The world tolerates nominal religion—it is highly respectable. But to walk closely with God, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to possess experimental piety, is degrading, mean and fanatical. The high-minded man has nothing in common with the meek and lowly follower of Jesus Christ. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, is a requisition wholly incompatible with his character. The Christian must make up his mind to be despised and rejected of men. He will soon find (if he lives near to God) that his old companions in sin will forsake him. They will be apprehensive that he may speak of religion, of death, and of a judgment to come, all of which subjects are disagreeable to the man of pleasure. He (saith our Saviour) that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. The fear of men is often a great obstacle in the road to heaven. "Shun the observation and the applause of men, looking only unto him who seeth every thought of our hearts, and every secret motive of our action ;" or "Love to be concealed and little esteemed. Be content to want praise, never being troubled when thou art slighted or undervalued, for thou canst not undervalue thyself," are maxims of good and great men. Fortitude.

Wilberforce.

Jer. Taylor.

" Careless, myself a dying man,
 " Of dying men's esteem ;
 " Happy, Oh God ! if thou approve,
 " Though all beside condemn."

Pray that you may be deeply rooted and grounded in faith. This alone will give the fortitude necessary to your Christian

character. Doctor Dick, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, has the following passage, which is worthy to be written on the tablet of your memory :

“ Without faith it is impossible to please God. The man in whose heart the principle of faith operates, convinced that he is guilty before God, and exposed to misery on account of sin, confides in the declarations of God respecting the remission of sins, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He confides in the goodness, mercy, faithfulness, and power of God, which secure the accomplishment of his promises, and the supply of all requisite strength and consolation to support him amidst the dangers and afflictions of life. He confides in the wisdom and excellence of those precepts which are prescribed as the rule of his conduct, and which are fitted to guide him to the regions of happiness ; and in the exercise of this confidence, he adds to his faith fortitude and resolution—knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, and prosecutes with courage this course of obedience, till at length an entrance is abundantly administered to him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Ashamed of
Christ.

This subject is closely allied to the last. The religion of the gospel is opposed to the pride of the human heart. It is often one of the severest trials of the Christian to deny himself and take up his cross and follow Christ. Whosoever (says Christ) shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. The fear of man, the desire to keep terms with the world, the dread of being called a bigot, a fanatic in religion, have been rocks upon which many a Christian has suffered shipwreck. A bold disciple of the cross looks only to God for approbation and support. He does not fear what man can do unto him, and he is not ashamed of the cause of Christ. But it is otherwise with the faint hearted Christian ; and until he ceases to be ashamed of Christ, he will make very little progress in divine grace. Let him therefore

awake from this dangerous apathy—his immortal soul is in danger.

“Soldiers of Christ arise,
“And put your armor on.”

Determine at once that you will shun the observation and the applause of men, and become a real servant of Jesus Christ. After many trials and temptations, the following resolutions were formed and adopted by the writer on an occasion when he took fresh courage in the cause of his Master.

I will give myself up to God without reserve, and will no longer keep terms with the world.

The blessed effects of this surrender will soon be felt. It will consist of—

1st. A full confidence in the declarations of God respecting the remission of sins, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

2d. A full and entire confidence in the goodness, mercy, faithfulness, and power of God, which secure the accomplishment of his promises, and the supply of all requisite strength and consolation to support me amidst the dangers and afflictions of life.

3d. I shall cease to be anxious about worldly matters, having confided all to God. I shall trust in his providence. If adverse fortune overtakes me, I can console myself with the reflection that it is the hand of God, it is my heavenly Father that has visited me, and that for some object beneficial to myself.

4th. After such full surrender, my connection with the world will not prevent me from the accomplishment of my whole duty to God.

I shall not feel anxious to keep terms with the world, and whenever my duty to God requires me to forfeit the good opinion of men, I shall do it without compunction.

I shall be contented with my situation and condition in life. I shall not be anxious to accomplish more than by steady, sober and faithful industry I shall be able to do. I shall determine deliberately, and in the fear of God, what I ought to do, and then do it faithfully.

In regard to leisure moments, let them all be devoted to God.

My thoughts must not dwell on any thing that is not useful, or that does not promise to turn to account either in this world or that which is to come. I must reflect that that world which is *to come* is now here almost at my door.

The great object, to which all my exertions must be directed, is to become more and more conformed to my Saviour Christ, to love God supremely, and to be filled with the spirit of universal benevolence.

I must constantly look unto Jesus, and not to the world. It is not material how mortals are impressed with my conduct, appearance, or sentiments; but it is altogether important that these should meet the constant approbation of Christ my Saviour.

I have had too much respect for the opinion of the world. I have been over solicitous for the good opinion of men. This error of my life is *now* to be amended. I am not to be inattentive to the ordinary rules of decorum, but am to cultivate a spirit of kindness, gentleness, and universal benevolence.

My intercourse with man is to be open, cheerful, gentle, and kind.

But above all things let me look unto Jesus. In the language of Bishop Porteus, "*Shun the observation and applause of men, looking only unto him who seeth every thought of our hearts, and every secret motive of our action.* The approbation of an enlightened conscience is better than the applause of men."

Lord God! give me grace that I may constantly look unto my Saviour Christ.

If I am in doubt, in regard to what I ought to do, let me at once ask the question, How would my Saviour have done this? The answer will always be satisfactory to a troubled soul.

Truth. A strict observance of truth is exceedingly important to a thrifty Christian. If he finds himself disposed to wander from it, he has great occasion for alarm. He should make it a subject of special prayer and great watchfulness. I cannot re-

frain from introducing here Doctor Dick's observation on this important subject. They are contained in his *Philosophy of Religion*.

"In the depraved society of our world, (says he,) truth is violated in ten thousand different ways. It is violated in thoughts, in words, in conversations, in oral discourses, in writings, in printed books—by gestures and by signs, by speaking and by remaining silent. It is violated in reference to the character of our neighbor, when we invent tales of falsehood respecting him: when we listen with pleasure to such tales when told by others: when we sit mute, and refuse to vindicate his character, when it is unjustly aspersed: when we endeavor to aggravate the circumstances which may have accompanied any criminal action: when we make no allowances for the force of temptation, and the peculiar circumstances in which the criminal may have been placed: when we fix upon an insulated act of vice and folly, and apply it to our neighbor as a general character: when we rake up, with a malevolent design, an action which he has long since reprobated, and repented of: when his character is made the subject of jest or merriment, and when, by smiles, and noddings, and gestures, we insinuate any thing injurious to his reputation. It is violated in promises, when we promise either what we have no intention of performing, or what we had no right to promise, or what is out of our power to perform, or what would be unlawful for us to execute. It is violated in threatenings when we neglect to put them in execution, or when we threaten to inflict what would be either cruel or unjust. When the conduct of liars and intriguers, of public robbers and murderers, is varnished over with a false glare of heroism and glory, and when the actions of upright men are without sufficient evidence, attributed to knavery or to the influence of fanaticism."

From this article it will be seen in how many ways truth may be violated, and how various and extensive is the duty of a meek and lowly follower of Jesus Christ in the observance of truth. I would add that we should be extremely careful how we raise expectations that may not be realized. This is

a common error, and should be considered a violation of truth.

Wealth,
Honor,
and
Fashion.

The desire for wealth, honor and fashion. These desires are sufficient not only to mar the happiness of man in this life, but also greatly to impede his progress in the road to Heaven. The real disciple of Christ will consider this subject as of vital importance. If the love of wealth, of honor, or of reputation, has a prominent place in his affections, and if he is not determined to subdue them, he may almost give up happiness in this world, as well as in that which is to come. There is no precept, no command in the Holy Scriptures which, on examination, will not be found to rest upon infinite wisdom, and to contribute to the present, as well as to the future and eternal happiness of man. When, therefore, our blessed Saviour said, lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. He said to man consult your present and your eternal happiness. Let us therefore be prudent and industrious, and leave the rest to God. Let the supreme object of our solicitude be to grow in grace, and to become more and more conformed to the will of God. It is only the thrifty Christian who can appreciate the happiness which attends a triumph over an habitual sin. When the Heavenly traveller perceives that by the grace of God, he has overcome an evil affection, he desires to bless God beyond all the powers of his soul; and the happiness which attends this state of feeling is far greater than the sinner has ever been permitted to feel. This will, in an eminent degree, be the happy condition of that man who successfully conquers the love of wealth, and the supreme object of whose affections is the eternal God who governs the Heavens and the Earth.

Man will not believe the truth in regard to the shortness of human life, and the consequent futility of laying up treasures on earth. The study of political arithmetic would open the eyes of many in this respect. By looking over the annuity

tables and acquainting ourselves with the rules for calculating the chances of human life, most men will find that they have been much mistaken in their estimate of longevity. At best, all is uncertain, all is vanity. Thou hast many goods; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry, (said the rich man to his soul); but God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. The following sentiments were the result of my reflections :

“Give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I be poor and steal, or rich and deny thee.”

Now this sentiment contains true wisdom. God knows what is best for me. If I was poor and necessitous, I should be tempted to do wrong. If I was rich, I should be apt to indulge my feelings, my appetite, and my pride, so as to lead me away from the path of righteousness. My fortune is therefore such as my Heavenly Guardian has seen best to confer upon me. Shall I then desire to have it otherwise? Shall I murmur? Shall I presume to question what God’s wisdom has ordained for my eternal benefit? Oh God, I beseech thee open my eyes to see and to understand that this dispensation of thy Providence is intended for my special good. Enable me to see and acknowledge thy hand, thy overruling Providence in this particular circumstance.

A thirst for fashionable life is poison to the Christian’s soul. Fashion. It is entirely inconsistent with his views and feelings. His associates in those walks are altogether unprofitable; and, like Noah’s dove, he finds no rest there for the sole of his foot. The following reflections were the result of my experience on this subject :

I must always strictly observe the rules of good breeding, and so far as the same are not inconsistent with religion, the established rules of etiquette : But I must not aim at, or desire to be a fashionable man. There is no passion that is more destructive to religion. The little subterfuges that are sometimes resorted to, to sustain fashionable life, are unworthy of a Christian. I have seen persons ambitious of this distinction exceedingly fearful lest they should compromise their fashionable standing; they would not, upon some occasions, be seen

conversing, or even sitting in a pew at church, or otherwise associating with an unfashionable family; even their nearest relatives, if not fashionable, must be avoided; they will court, by the most sycophantic means, persons of high consideration; and it is often by acts so degrading as these that a standing in fashionable life is sustained.

Surely I that am striving to serve God and secure my eternal interest, can take no part or lot with such men; but while I entertain these views, let me love and pray for them, so that I may be a true disciple of my Saviour Christ. Oh God, enable me to yield up forever all ideas of fashionable life.

Selfishness.

The principle of selfishness is extremely difficult to subdue in the heart of man; it ought not to be entirely eradicated. There are many things which concern ourselves, and which morality and religion require us to attend to. For example: if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel; and there are also certain principles of our nature which are essential to self-preservation; but the selfishness which is condemned by our religion, is of two kinds: first, that which may be termed the spirit of party; and secondly, selfishness in the ordinary sense of the term, and which consists in an exclusive regard to personal feeling and personal comfort, without reference to the happiness of others, and also by that morbid love of wealth which is destructive to the duties of benevolence and charity.

The injurious consequences of the spirit of party are very extensive. One of a most serious character is to be found in religious sects holding a particular dogma which they feel bound to support. Persons of this description are not open to the light of truth; they feel pledged to support their particular creeds, and for this purpose will often pervert the meaning of the plainest texts of Scripture; so in respect to the great, the almost universal abuse of reason and judgment by politicians who are wedded to a party; they cease to be candid, reasonable beings; they become the advocates of a party; the opinions of almost every politician in this country on a new political measure can be known at once by ascertaining

to what party he belongs. Most men do not think for themselves; they adopt the opinion of others without examination; and thus it is with politicians that the faculties of reason and judgment have, upon political questions, fallen into disuse. The brute is swayed by his appetite—the sectarian by his creed, and the politician by his party. It is high time that men should begin to seek after truth; that they should cease to be governed by party prejudice, either civil or religious. If the splendid talents which are now, in a great degree, devoted to popularity in the Congress of the United States, were exclusively employed in the investigation of truth, what great and good results might be expected to flow from such exertions. A hope is entertained that religious men will, at no great distance of time, get tired of political chicanery, and seek after truth. I cannot well conceive how a warm partizan can be an experimental Christian. He must either be a traitor to God or to his party. Party measures, having popularity for their object, are, in general, insidious and hypocritical. To the meek and lowly Christian, then, I say, come out from amongst these politicians, and be ye separate.

That love of self, which is injurious to others, and which interferes with Christian duties, is extremely prejudicial. The miser who has acquired a morbid love of riches, is sacrificed to this passion. His moral condition is truly awful. How hardly (said our blessed Saviour) shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven? This love of riches swallows up all other passions. It is difficult for the miser even to do justice at the expense of his interest; and as to acts of charity, they are rarely performed by him. The inordinate love of self-admiration prevents us also from doing justice to others. We become envious and covetous. One of the most important duties of the Christian is benevolence. This is wholly inconsistent with self-love. It requires us to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us. In short, selfishness must be rooted out from the heart of the Christian. It does not belong to the regenerate man. He ought to be disinterested. Our blessed Saviour was in no wise selfish.

He laid down his life for others, and thus set for us a perfect example of benevolence and charity.

Wasting of
time.

Wasting of precious time. This is the sin of the unwise—the improvident Christian. The foolish virgins took their lamps, and took no oil with them, and when they came the door was shut. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour the Son of man cometh. Human life is short at best, and altogether uncertain in its tenure. Work while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. There is no subject upon which the industrious Christian should be more jealous than this. He should husband his time as a miser does his pence. Let him therefore frequently and constantly look to this important subject. He must, of course, watch and pray; and if he finds his mind disposed to wander, let him, by the faculty of attention, bring it to think on some one of the great imperfections of his heart. The growing Christian ought always to have on hand, or in other words, to be laboring against some one imperfection of his nature. What are you doing now? said one Christian to another. Answer. I am now, and have been for the last six weeks, engaged in prayer to God, that he would subdue my proud heart. The Christian should never be entirely idle. If he be riding, walking, sitting, or standing, with an unemployed mind, let him say, Now is the time to think of this particular imperfection of my heart. Now is the time to pray to God for his special grace in this respect, and let him ply himself accordingly. The Christian who works thus will be sure to gain ground; and when he arrives at the door, it will not be shut. He will enter the everlasting gate, and will set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. On this subject also, as well as on all others, let him write down in his book the operations of his mind. The following is copied from the entries of a fellow traveller to eternity:

My greatest defect of Christian duty now is, the wasting of my precious time. I do not improve a large portion thereof to the glory of God, and to my advancement in the divine life. This grand error requires my instant attention. I have in-

dulged myself in musing on needless, unprofitable subjects. I must now cast out all such thoughts, and recollect that it is sinful to indulge in thinking on matters that never may become useful or proper ; and that there are urgent and pressing things that concern my eternal interest, that require present attention.

O God ! I feel the absolute necessity of reformation. I pray thee, for Christ's sake, to help me to economize my precious time. Enable me to employ every moment of it to some holy and religious purpose. Great God ! give me pious industry. May I be alive to thee and dead to the world. When I feel cold, lukewarm, or irresolute, wilt thou, Oh God ! reanimate my drooping spirits. Give me thy quickening grace, that I may speedily recover from such apathy and indifference.

This subject can never be stricken from our memoranda. It must occupy the Christian during his whole life. The end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

To the Christian who wants all his time to purify his heart, wandering thoughts are an alarming symptom. The indulgence of these is expressly forbidden in the holy scriptures. A vast deal of time has been wasted in this way which might have been profitably employed in prayer to God. I will introduce here directions from Mason on Self-knowledge on this particular subject :

“Guard against (says he)—

1. All fretful and discontented thoughts.
2. Do not harbor anxious or apprehensive thoughts.
3. Dismiss all angry or wrathful thoughts.
4. Drive away all untimely, unprofitable, silly, unreasonable thoughts.
5. Cast out all wild and extravagant thoughts.
6. Repel all impure and lascivious thoughts.
7. Calm all hurried and exciting thoughts.
8. Do not indulge gloomy or melancholy thoughts.
9. Reject with abhorrence all profane and blasphemous thoughts.”

Wandering
thoughts.

There is no habit of the mind more to be guarded against than unprofitable musing, and especially what is called building castles in the air. The mind ought always to be profitably employed.

A wandering imagination, the indulgence of unholy thoughts, is now my besetting sin. The anticipation of future beneficial events, that may, or may not happen, often occasions much uneasiness. The mind is apt to make calculations, and to build upon such events, as if they had actually happened; and when disappointment comes, it occasions great uneasiness. O God! for Christ's sake, enable me to eschew all such habits, and to anticipate happiness only in the world to come, where there can be no disappointment.

Oh God! I am sensible that this is displeasing to thee. Help me, therefore, gracious Parent, to cast them out immediately, and in place thereof to indulge heavenly meditations.

Coldness,
lukewarmness. Coldness or lukewarmness. When these feelings take possession of the industrious Christian, he becomes much alarmed. He apprehends that he is receding from the love of Christ. They are in general caused by the commission of sin, or by neglect of duty. He who walks close with God is seldom subject to them. Prayer—fervent prayer—is the remedy. The following reflections were written under this state of feeling:

I feel that I now savor of the world. My affections are scattered. My corrupt nature has paralyzed my soul. I cannot concentrate my aspirations towards the throne of Grace. I fear that I am not now a child of God; that I do not love my Saviour Christ. Oh! that I could feel properly humbled before God, my maker.

Lord God! I feel that I have incurred thy displeasure. I am at a distance from thee. I am unworthy to pray even for the pardon of my sins. I have a burthen of sin upon me. I have no peace. My conscience is disquieted within me.

Lord God! have mercy upon me, a sinner, and enable me now to feel a godly sorrow for sin; that I may be justified in thy sight, through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

Despondency is a feeling which sometimes comes over the child of God. It is often occasioned by an irregular state of the body. Under such circumstances the Christian should recollect that it is but momentary, that it will shortly give place to the blessed spirit of hope. This feeling too is frequently productive of good. We require more humility, and dark moments are often beneficial in this respect. The following reflections were written during such a state of feeling : Despondency.

I am very uneven in my feelings. Sometimes my whole soul breathes nothing but God. At other times, I have no religious energy. I am cold and lukewarm. It appears to me, upon these occasions, as if I were in great danger of falling into sin. I strive to pray, but I have not the spirit of supplication. My prayers seem unavailing. In place of going forward in the road to Heaven, I seem to recede. What shall I do? Lord! Thou hast the words of eternal life—I will look unto thee. My help cometh from thee. Oh! help these infirmities. Give me the comfort of thy help again, and establish me with thy free Spirit.

It is decidedly sinful to covet any thing which belongs to another. A woman's attractions are given her to the end that eligible persons may be induced to marry her, and to provide for her maintenance during her life; and to avail ourselves of them upon any other condition than that of matrimony, is as sinful as it would be to steal or to cheat, and ought to bring one into disgrace and disrepute in the same manner as the crime of theft. There are, at this time, petitions before our Legislature for a law declaring seduction an indictable offence. Such a law would be just and proper. To steal the money of a female is less sinful than to tarnish her honor. If the seducer is sent to the state prison for a term of years, his crime will meet its proper punishment in public estimation. But even to look on a woman to lust after her, is to indulge sin in the heart. Let the Christian beware of all impurity in this respect. Chastity.

Oh, Gracious God! give me chastity, and enable me always to cast out immediately every impure impression.

Talking too
much.

Talking too much and indiscreetly is often injurious to the cause of religion. The tongue is indeed an unruly member, and we should watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation in this particular. It is a good habit, when we are about to enter into society, to pray for Christian prudence and discretion. I fear I have often wounded the cause of Christ by conversations of an irreligious character. My experience led me to write on this subject as follows :

I am too apt to speak when I should be silent. It is much better for me to withhold my words. A wise man hears much, but speaks little.

I am not often properly called upon to give my opinion ; perhaps the occasions are very few.

It is by speaking too much and too often that one loses both influence and reputation. The opinions of those who talk much are rarely valuable, and they have but little weight in the community.

A true disciple of Jesus must be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.

I am to talk less, and to pray and to meditate more.

It is by continual prayer and vigilance that the mind of a Christian is kept in a proper frame of humility and devotion ; and when this frame of mind is absent, then an uncertain and fluctuating condition succeeds, which is much to be deprecated and avoided.

It is necessary to devote a portion of each day to God ; and without this, there is no true peace or prosperity for the Christian. He requires continual support, and must seek it by looking steadfastly to Christ his Saviour.

Impatience.

Impatience. This is an obvious defect of Christian character ; it is an unreasonable state of the mind, which tends to disqualify us for sound reflection or devotion. The Christian must not only be just, but reasonable. In fact, to be unreasonable is, in most cases, to be unjust. This temper of the mind is inconsistent with a gentle, meek and lowly spirit, and ought, under no circumstances, to be indulged. "Be patient and learn to forego your inclinations when duty

requires it." Prayer and vigilance are necessary to preserve us against this sin.

Godliness with Contentment is great gain. The man who is discontented with his fortune and circumstances, will find little or no time for fervent, uninterrupted devotion ; his mind will necessarily be occupied with the causes of his discontent, when it should be anxious for his eternal welfare. Let us therefore do whatever prudence dictates, and leave the rest to God. Pray fervently for this state of mind, and it will be given you. I have learned, says St. Paul, in whatever state I am, therewith to be contented.

Discontented-
ness.

The Christian ought not to be subject to capricious humors. He should determine, in the fear of God, what he ought to do, and do it with all his might ; his character ought to be firm ; he ought not to form his resolutions until he has well matured the subject. So in regard to his opinions of men, measures and doctrines ; they ought not to be formed from prejudice or from slight and insufficient grounds. There is no error of our lives more common than this. The political opinions of partisans are no test of truth. This is perfectly well understood. It is only by experience, as a general rule, that the people of this country arrive at any just conclusion as to the utility or inutility of political measures. In all cases where we have no opinions of our own, we are prone to adopt those of others ; which opinions, thus adopted, may have been the result of prejudice, or they may have been formed on slight or insufficient grounds. A just man ought to form no opinion until he has well matured the subject.

Capricious
humors.

The Christian must avoid excesses of every description. All his desires, his appetites and propensities must be brought into subjection. St. Paul says, I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself become a castaway. Moderation of expression, with a caution which the fear of offending will dictate, will, in all cases, be found to enter into the character of a disciple of Christ. Let your moderation be known to all men.

A want of
Moderation.

Hasty actions. So in regard to actions. We ought not to act without due deliberation. How many hasty actions do we constantly repent of. Wherever there is a moral responsibility, man should beware of two things—first, that his heart is right in the sight of God; and, to this end, he must avoid all self-interest, prejudice, party zeal or passion—and secondly, he must act understandingly; his information must be drawn from pure sources; and in all doubtful cases, let him pray.

A perturbed mind. The Christian must be mild and gentle; he must not suffer the mind to be perturbed or hurried. This is to be brought about by vigilance and prayer. By the use of such means, the mind will become calm and deliberate, and will not undertake to pass upon things until they are brought clearly and deliberately before it. A comment on this subject is in the following words:

Do not suffer the mind to be perturbed or hurried.

That this maxim is important to me, I cannot doubt; that it is possible for me to attain to it, is equally certain. I must employ more time in prayer and devotion. I think even three hours in the twenty-four would not be too much time to devote exclusively to God by reading and prayer.

My mind is not always in a condition to judge rightly; it is sometimes inactive, and at other times confused. *Quere*: Are not such things attributable to my sins? Does not God employ them as means to humble my pride, and bring me to the footstool of his grace? I think this is so.

O, Gracious Parent! give me wisdom to amend my life, and to learn thy ways.

When my mind is not qualified, I should give no opinion. Under such circumstances, let me say, I am not prepared.

Let my moderation be known to all men. I must watch the little beginnings of excitement. I must consider that a hasty opinion or action is more injurious than no opinion or action at all. I must recollect that I am morally responsible for the errors I commit. Oh, God! deliver me from them.

Whatever judgment has been given me, enable me to exercise it in all its strength, with a due regard to truth, and without dissembling with God or man.

I am often influenced to hasty opinions by my anxiety to be considered quick in my perceptions or qualified to give a right judgment. This is caused by that evil spirit of pride with which I have had so much trouble. Pride, with me, seems to be the root of all evil.

The remedies are—

1. Vigilance.
2. Prayer.
- 3 Industry.

Eating to excess is a vice in respect to which even experimental Christians do not seem to be sufficiently aware. Its immoral effects will be clearly seen when we consider that it produces indisposition of the body which necessarily occasions irregularities of the mind, and unfits us for religious devotion.

Eating to
excess.

Moderation in eating, and circumspection as well in the quantity as the quality, tend to preserve health; and are Christian virtues, the performance of which should be strictly attended to. Every meal we eat should be an act of worship, and hence such meal should be ate with great prudence and in the constant fear of God. The moment we become guilty of an indiscretion, the meal becomes sinful; and as he that commits sin swallows poison, it must be expected to operate to our disadvantage.

Oh God, for Christ's sake, give me this religious prudence, and may I always pray over every meal I eat.

Christian circumspection is constantly required in regard to the punctual performance of engagements. It is sinful to contract a debt which we have no reasonable prospect of paying. It is reprehensible to promise what we may not be able to perform, or to make any lawful engagement without exerting ourselves for its strict performance. Every Christian is therefore bound, before he makes a promise, to institute the inquiry whether he can perform it; and if this be doubtful, to shape his engagement accordingly.

Performance
of engage-
ments.

The active Christian has a serious duty to perform in this respect. He is bound, in the first place, to make a provision for his household. After which, he is responsible for all superfluous expenditures. We act as moral trustees, and must

Prodigality
of expendi-
tures.

give a strict account of our stewardship. A man may not do with his own as he pleases, provided his pleasure is not to do the will of the Almighty. Great and Eternal God! How various, how extensive are the religious duties of man! Oh! give me the Spirit of thy Grace, that I may be guided into the way of all truth.

Loose keeping
of accounts.

A strict regard must be paid to the settlement of all accounts, according to the principles of justice; and, for this purpose, the Christian must be particular to make all entries before they are forgotten; and in making them, he must have a religious regard to what appears to be right.

Oh, God! for Christ's sake, enable me to observe and keep these rules.

Blessed are
peace-makers.

I lately succeeded in reconciling two clever men who had for some time been enemies. I doubt, however, whether it was done sufficiently in the spirit of the Gospel. In Doctor Stanhope Smith's Sermon on the Forgiveness of Injuries, I find these observations:

"We sometimes see parties at variance brought together by the address and management of common friends; to their instances, at length, they yield: But observe with what reluctance they meet; what mutual coldness and distrust they betray at every step; how many explanations must be made; how many punctilios must be adjusted; how many compromises must be attempted, in order to save a false sentiment of honor. Do you believe that you have fulfilled the celestial law of charity by a reconciliation which has proceeded upon these grounds? No: Even the world is not deceived; it sees that they are not friends; it perceives, in their conversation, in their conduct, in their whole manner, the coldness of their hearts. The Spirit of the blessed Jesus regards a forgiven enemy like a brother reconciled; and an enemy who refuses to be reconciled, it regards with those sentiments of meekness and benediction that can flow only from a heart touched and animated with the love of God."

In reconciliations of this character, the disciple should be

cautious, lest he becomes a party to concessions not founded in truth.

There is a proper time to think of business, and a proper time to devote to God. Do not, my fellow Christian, allow the business of this world to intrude on holy time. To keep out worldly thoughts, let the mind be properly employed in religious exercises, by devotional reading, writing and prayer, or by holy meditation. Short and fervent prayers are generally to be preferred. In the course of Christian experience, the disciple will compile such a collection of prayers as will be applicable to himself. The compilation will contain the principal subjects of his solicitude. This should be committed to writing, and at least once every day it should be read over with a devotional spirit. A few short sentences may precede it. The following is copied from a religious pocket-book :

“God out of Christ is a consuming fire.”

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

“He that commits sin swallows poison, which, from that moment, begins to operate.”

“Let your moderation be known to all men.”

“Shun the observation and the applause of men, looking only unto him who seeth every thought of our hearts and every secret motive of our action.”

“Love to be concealed and little esteemed ; be content to want praise, never being troubled when thou art slighted or undervalued, for thou canst not undervalue thyself.”

“Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.”

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief ; and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

“God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”

Let me love all men, and show that I do so by my daily walk and conversation.

The great doctrine of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, with love to men and universal holiness, ought to employ our best and brightest hours of meditation.

Pray for the spirit of humility.

Pray for the spirit of true devotion and holiness.

Eternity will shortly commence with me. Very shortly I shall launch into that blessed world of spirits where my Saviour Christ has gone before me, and where all departed saints are now in glory.

May I remember that if I indulge evil in my heart, God will not hear me.

He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast off.

Prayer. Oh, God ! thou seest me. Hallowed be thy name. Thou art my maker and my redeemer. I am not ashamed of thee, blessed Jesus. I will acknowledge thee at all times and under all circumstances to be my Lord and my God. I believe in the efficacy of thy blood to cleanse me from all sin, and to inspire me with perfect love to thee. May I shun the observation and applause of men, looking only unto thee who seest every thought of my heart, and every secret motive of my actions. May I love to be concealed, and seek to withdraw myself from all competition, strife or emulation. May I worship thee in every act of nature, in every meal I eat, and in all the usual occupations of life.

Help me to avoid every species of flattery, and to recollect that whatever of discontent and misery is hanging about me, is attributable to my sins.

And help me, O God ! for Christ's sake, to eschew the love of worldly goods, and reputation for talents. And may I learn to be contented with what thou hast vouchsafed to give me, always remembering that all things work together for good to those who love thee. Enable me constantly to look unto thee, and not to the world ; to consider that it is not material how mortals are impressed with my conduct, appearance or sentiments ; but that it is altogether important that they should meet thy divine approbation. Give me grace to cultivate a spirit of humility and meekness. Purge my heart from all envy, hatred and malice. Make me gentle, kind, open, frank

and cheerful towards all men. Give me grace to be just and upright in all my dealings, quiet and peaceable, full of compassion, and ready to do good to all men ; and, above all things, give me a spirit of universal benevolence and charity, and enable me, O God ! to be extremely careful how I judge my fellow beings ; and to remember that my imperfections are so great that I shall require every moment that thou hast given me to conform myself to the blessed example of my Saviour Christ. And since thou hast ordained that supreme love to thee is the only source and fountain from whence all Christian graces flow, let me hunger and thirst after this love ; and I here supplicate thee, for Christ's sake, to prepare my heart for the reception of it.

May I be as unambitious, unaspiring and unconcerned about worldly honors and distinctions as a little child.

Inspire me with truth and justice, and give me a pure heart and a right conversation.

Enable me to exercise patience, forbearance, long suffering and universal benevolence.

Give me the spirit of true devotion and holiness, that I may enjoy thy divine approbation.

May I always remember that without faith it is impossible to please thee.

Let me have a due sense of my guilt, misery and helplessness, and confide in the promises of salvation through the merits of my Saviour Christ.

And, O God ! increase my faith, and may I add to that faith fortitude, resolution, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness and brotherly kindness ; and enable me to prosecute with courage this course of obedience till at length an entrance is abundantly administered to me into thy everlasting kingdom.

Whatever judgment has been given me, enable me to exercise it in all its strength, with a due regard to truth, and without dissembling with thee or my fellow men, always remembering that I am morally responsible for the errors I commit through indolence or haste.

And without any selfish motive, let me constantly aim to be useful to my fellow men ; and for this purpose, give all my

talents, my energies, and my affections, a holy and righteous direction, that they may not serve any unholy purposes, or minister to any unholy desires.

Let me beware of prosperity, lest I lose the just ballast of my soul, and wander in the unprofitable atmosphere of the world; enable me to turn all my temporal vexations and afflictions to my spiritual advantage.

Let me eschew all pride and vanity, and always remember that worldly importance is altogether fallacious.

I have indeed nothing but what I have received at thy hands. Forbid, therefore, that I should sin against thee in consequence of thy merciful Providence to me.

I am now willing to bear reproach and persecution for thy name's sake.

The following prayer and reflections were occasioned by reading Edwards on the Affections:

Edwards
on the
Affections.

Great and eternal God! who alone art perfect in holiness, infinite in love! All power is in thy hands, and all homage is due to thee! I desire to approach thy throne, and to contemplate thy divine perfections, and by means thereof to become awed into submission to thy holy will, and to acquire—

1. Supreme love to thee.
2. Love to all mankind.
3. Humility.
4. Lowliness of mind.
5. Meekness.
6. Gentleness.
7. Truth and justice—and to become
8. Unaspiring.
9. Unambitious, and
10. Unostentatious.

Supreme
love to
God.

There are many reasons why I should love God supremely: First. Because I trust he loves me supremely, and will continue to do so to all eternity. After mortals will have forgotten that I ever existed, God will remember me for good to all eternity. He has provided for my eternal happiness.

2. My passions, feelings and manners have conspired to render my deportment too positive, fierce and severe. I regret

that as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, I greatly lack in humility and meekness. I pray God that I may consider that I wound the cause of Christ whenever I exhibit such a deportment.

3. The poison of envy is not wholly eradicated from my soul. Oh, God ! for Christ's sake, cleanse my heart from this sin.

A good work seems to have been commenced in my heart, and I trust God is carrying it on. I do not find that the sins of my whole life are now troublesome to me. No : it is the imperfections of my nature—it is these impurities that still hang about me. If I were now free from all unrighteous affections, I should feel sanctified in the sight of God.

The Christian traveller will occasionally find it necessary to make new editions of his religious companion. Like the thrifty merchant, he will take frequent accounts of his stock ; and will endeavor, before God, to ascertain how he stands, and herein to inquire what progress he has made in the divine life since his last accounting. Let him remember that he that is not gaining ground, is receding. There is no standing still in the road to Heaven. The table of defects of character will (amongst other things) be varied according to his present experience. A second edition of one of these contained the following list of imperfections :

1. Want of firmness.
2. Hasty opinions.
3. Hasty actions.
4. Undertaking to do things unprepared.
5. A want of patience.
6. A want of moderation.
7. A want of fortitude.
8. Indulgence in angry passions.
9. Peevishness
10. Uncharitableness for the opinion of others.
11. A want of self-denial, *forbearance*.
12. Wandering, unprofitable thoughts.
13. Wasting of precious time.
14. Boasting, (nothing to boast of.)
15. Indiscreet regimen.

16. A want of supreme love to God.
 17. A want of humility, meekness and lowliness of mind.
 18. Selfishness.
 19. An impure heart.
 20. Prodigality of expenditures.
 21. A want of openness of heart.
 22. Too much pride in many things.
 23. A want of rigid adherence to truth.
 24. A hurried movement.
 25. An excited state of the mind.
 26. A want of compassion for others.
 27. Occasionally a low, degenerate, relaxed state of the mind.
- At this juncture, my feelings are cold, and prayer seems unavailing.

Happiness. Happiness consists in a contented state of the mind. This arises from a body free of pain, and a mind satisfied with its condition, and in the constant anticipation of eternal bliss. This solid enjoyment can only be brought about by the religion of the Gospel. The more of this religion we have, the more of happiness we enjoy. What of discontent and misery is hanging about me, is attributable to my sins. There is not a single imperfection of my nature to which I cannot distinctly trace some trouble of my mind; so, on the contrary, there is not a single Christian virtue which is not constantly bringing to my soul a rich reward.

Man in this life should conform himself to the example of his Saviour. His constant endeavor should be to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. We should take an account of our stewardship. We should husband our religious resources. We must ascertain the condition of our hearts and affections, and strive daily to amend them. This is the blessed economy of religion which every Christian should pursue.

A single moment of our precious time should not escape without some improvement. Every act of nature should be an act of worship, and every faculty of the mind should be employed in improving the heart. There is a just way of doing every thing, and one can worship God.

1. In every act of nature.
2. In the usual occupations of life.

3. In every lawful pleasure and employment upon earth.

With the mind properly disciplined, no real pleasure is denied. All our vicious propensities, when brought into subjection, give energy and holy ambition to the Christian, and become useful pleasures. The passion of pride, when stripped of its vicious companions, envy and love of admiration, becomes a just balance to the mind; it strengthens the judgment, and greatly contributes to the formation of an eminent Christian. "For a small moment I have forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord my Redeemer."

Work while the day lasts. The Christian has a great work to execute, that of forming himself after the pattern of his Lord and Master through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to our fervent prayers. 5th Chap. Galatians, 17th verse: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Jer. Taylor says: "And if love hath filled all the corners of the soul, it is alone able to do all the work of God. There are some persons in whom the Spirit of God hath breathed so bright a flame of love that they do all their acts of virtue by perfect choice, and without objection."

Whether we eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God, by which rule every action of nature becomes religious, and every meal we eat an act of worship, and shall have its reward in proportion as an act of prayer.

I bless God that I may worship him in every act of my profession. Hannah More says: "Holy intention is to the actions of a man that which the soul is to the body, or the root to the tree."

11th Chap. Matthew, 29th verse: Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burthen light.

It is my privilege to entertain the hope of eternal happiness. It animates the soul.

Happiness ! Glorious happiness ! Eternal bliss is my portion forever !

That composure of spirit and peace of mind which I now experience is an earnest of the blessed condition of the saints of God. Even my few days upon the earth will be spent in happiness compared with the life of the unregenerate man.

When they shall end, then commences an eternal weight of glory. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love him—1 Corinth. 2d chap. 9th verse—Isaiah, 64: 4. But this happiness is promised to those only who continue faithful until death.

And the comparative happiness of the Christian in this life depends upon his entire devotion to God. He that undertakes to serve God and Mammon, will experience none of the blessings of Christianity.

In that blessed world to come, there will be an eternal weight of glory. Let me imagine, then, the happiest moment of my whole life, and consider that this bears no comparison whatever with the blissful state of the saints ; and that that happy condition is to exist to all eternity. The blessing of an eternity of this character seems to be altogether beyond any thing that ought to be conferred on as frail a mortal as I am ; and this would be true as to myself ; but it is the imputed righteousness of my Saviour Christ that will richly entitle me to this blessing. Oh ! how ought I to love and adore my Redeemer !

Let me set my affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ; and not on things below, all of which will disappear in a moment of time.

In a few years from this time, if I continue to grow in grace and hold fast to the end, I shall enter into the blissful state above-mentioned. At that time it will be unavailing to me what respect was shown to me in this world. Then I shall not regret that I was, by my fortune, my talents or my circumstances, restrained from the indulgence of pride and vanity.

The absence of what my corrupt nature seems to covet now, will then be rather a subject of joy than of grief. It is exceedingly unwise to covet in time what will be prejudicial to me to all eternity. It is God that withholds these things from me in order to advance my eternal interest; and shall I then murmur at this dispensation of my great Benefactor?

Oh! thou great and eternal God! Grant me now a fresh supply of thy sanctifying grace, that I may not only be reconciled to this discipline of my soul, but that I may bless thee for its gracious efficacy, and pray for the continuance of thy fostering care.

After I shall have entered into the blessed state of the saints, and shall have been millions and millions of years in its enjoyment, I shall have no less days to sing God's praise than when I first began.

Oh, God! give me now such a realizing sense of these great truths, that every thing in time, when compared with eternity, may vanish forever.

It is my privilege to joy even in the prospect of the grave. I must believe that in every situation in which I can be placed by the will of God, that my happiness is safe. It is my Heavenly Father who loves me, that has thus disposed of me. It is his will that should be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. So let me never distrust his gracious Providence, but submit myself to it under all circumstances.

No honor or pleasure, which the world can confer, is equal to the consolation of the blessed Gospel which I now enjoy.

One thing is very important to me, and that is, to be candid before God—to consider myself at all times, and under all circumstances, in his presence, rather than in the presence of men—to desire to appear to be, neither more nor less than what I am. God puts a just estimate on my character; all my imperfections are known to him, and they ought not to be concealed from men. I am a weak, feeble and imperfect being, having no moral strength of my own, possessing nothing—which ought to authorize me to look for the respectful attention of men.

I therefore pray God to enable me fully to realize these truths, and to give more grace that I may divest myself of all false pretensions, and may not dissemble either before God or man.

The author publishes the following entries from his Christian Journal, in the hope that they may prove beneficial to travellers in that straight and narrow road that leads to eternal life; it is believed that if the intelligent Christian would more frequently publish his trials and resolutions exactly as they occur to him, that such memoranda would often be found useful to the disciple of Christ. During the time in which the portion of the Journal now submitted, has been forming, the author has read with profit a little treatise, "entitled All is Well," and also a book on the natural history of Enthusiasm; from both of which many of the ideas here submitted were obtained, and even the language of the authors has been adopted; it may be thought by some that these extracts are unnecessary, that those passages might as well have been read in the respective originals. The object of the author in transcribing them in his Journal was, that he might the more conveniently read and pray over them in connection with the other subjects of his experience.

March 24, 1841.

I feel the want of a more perfect surrender to God. I ought not to repine at any event of his providence.

I ought to turn every vexation, every disappointment, every loss, and every failure of an anticipated beneficial event, to my spiritual advantage. God requires this of his servants. I am striving to be a servant of the living God; this is my duty, my privilege. It is the great, the distinguishing feature of the Christian, to render his misfortunes in life, beneficial to his immortal soul. Let me therefore continually rejoice in God, and in every event of his providence.

Let me prove by my experience, that every disappointment, every loss, and every failure of an anticipated beneficial event, may be turned to my spiritual advantage; and that by shunning the observation and applause of men, and looking only unto God, I can assure to myself heavenly peace and stability of mind, with such other advantages as these virtues may bring with them.

It is undoubtedly true, says a pious writer : " That every afflictive stroke of Providence sent upon the child of grace, is designed for his special benefit ; and although we cannot at all times see or understand the Divine purpose, yet some secret end is to be answered. God is in all. The hand and love of a father is there. They are to purge us from sin, to wean us from the world, to bring us to the foot of the Cross, to show us that our rest is not here, it is beyond the grave. What though they give us pain, they do us the more good : if it has not answered its object it will be repeated. Do not think any trial sanctified, till you are suitably affected. Are you humble ? Are you prayerful ? Are you submissive ? "

March 27, 1841.

I find myself continually beset by evil, unprofitable anticipations of future events. I endeavour to cast them out of my mind, but they often return upon me. They are surely displeasing to God, and therefore must be avoided.

Carnal confidence, reliance on the world, on fortune, on the smiles of men, for approbation and support, are errors which I must become sensible of, before I can attain a thorough peace with God. My reliance must be on God, and not on the world.

" Love of the creature and hopes and expectations of carnal pleasures, are an evidence that the love of the world still lurks within. Our hopes and expectations should be of things beyond this life. We ought not to calculate on happiness here ; our kingdom is not of this world," &c. Now here lies a defect of my Christian character.

O God, purge my heart from the love of this world, and from hopes and expectations of any future beneficial event this side the grave.

" If we have our support, our comforts from the creature, we indeed are we ; the creature has no power to afford us support."

Reliance upon God, says the same author, prevents :

" 1. Rash conclusions in regard to his providence.

2. It prevents sinful doubts ; we stagger not at the promises of God, but are strong in faith, giving glory to God.

3. It prevents immoderate sorrow. The Christian does not give up in despair ; he does not say I am ruined, I am undone ; but he says God will, in his own good time, deliver me. I trust in God.

4. The consolation is, that God hath done it—it is for the best. It is his hand, let him do what seemeth best, I am safe. There is nothing in which believers show a meaner spirit, (and yet few sins beset them more readily) than an anxious concern and care about some outward things which have in themselves no power to do good or evil any otherwise than as instruments, in God's hands, to attain his appointed ends.

Blessings attending Resignation.

1. It gives inward peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Ps. 26. 13.

2. It gives an enduring patience. We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience. In your patience possess ye your souls. A man cannot be at peace without this. He is at the beck of every trial—every mere inconvenience in life has power to depress him.

3. It creates in the soul living expectation. I will wait upon the Lord ; he will come at last.

4. It produces in the soul settled praise and thankfulness. The Christian is persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed. Faith enables us to submit to all the providences of God. O great and eternal God, for Christ's sake, increase my faith !

March 30, 1841.

I feel this day a want of more faith, of religious stability ; the necessity of casting all my cares on Providence. I am troubled with wandering, unprofitable thoughts.

Blessed Father, for Christ's sake, increase my faith, my religious stability and firmness, and enable me to cast all my cares on thee, for thou carest for me ; give me grace to thrust out

all wandering, unprofitable thoughts, and enable me this day to employ all my time to some useful, some commendable object.

March 31, 1841.

Anxiety about worldly matters.

Thoughts on this subject have much engrossed my mind this morning; my imagination has wandered; and wicked thoughts have beset me. Great God, deliver me from all worldly, all unholy thoughts, and enable me to cast my cares on thee.

These thoughts are displeasing to God. Can I love him and continue to indulge them?

I feel my extreme sinfulness—my helplessness before God. My sole dependence is upon the ever blessed atonement.

The following is taken from Mr. Fletcher's work on *Christian Perfection*.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward chambers of imagery, where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart which should be all flesh is yet partly stone; that your soul which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, a hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers, for the remains of *Envy, Jealousy, Fretfulness, Anger, Pride, Impatience, Peevishness, Formality, Sloth, Prejudice, Bigotry, Carnal confidence, Evil shame, Self-righteousness, Tormenting fears, Uncharitableness, Suspicious idolatrous love*. Probably many other evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Through grace detect these evils, by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, *but especially at an hour of temptation*.

By frequent and deep confessions, drag out all these abominations, these sins which would not have Christ to reign alone over you; bring them before him, place them in the light of his countenance; and if you do it in faith, that light and the

warmth of his love will kill them, as the light and heat kill the worms which the plough turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day. Nor plead that you can do nothing, for by the help of Christ you can do all things.

April 15, 1841.

One besetting sin by which I have been this day condemned, is a disposition, where I am contending for any position, to give to the facts upon which it depends, an uncandid, unfair construction; this is an error, even in a professional point of view, that cannot be justified. I must be open, candid and just in all my intercourse with men. From this time forth I resolve, with God's assistance, to be exceedingly circumspect as to all such matters. O God, I rely upon thee for grace to aid me in this holy blessed work of reformation.

I have ate too much this day. I have also taken what has disagreed with me. I feel now rather disqualified for my religious devotions. I have sinned against God; this I have often done in this same way, and have resolved and re-resolved not to commit a like error, and still I do it.

Here is a radical defect of character, a want of firmness to resist temptation. I set out this day afresh; I now resolve once more; O that God would give me strength of purpose to resist temptation! Let my judgment, and not my appetite, now direct and guide me.

I ought to pray over every meal I eat that God will vouchsafe to me prudence—*Religious prudence*; and to pray while I eat, to eat the entire meal in the fear of God. When I am about to eat a meal, I am about to enter into temptation. More prayer than usual is then required.

April 17.

Dark gloomy moments. These may be visited upon me for my sins. When I am sensible of them, let me consider that it is the visitation of God for, or on account of some imperfection in my character; and then let me humble myself under

the mighty power of God, and say it is God ; let him do what seemeth right in his sight. My duty is to be silent and know the rod and him that hath appointed it.

I find that I am extremely nervous, that misfortunes of any kind, or even the least chance of loss, has power to depress and hurry me away from myself. They occasion irregularities in my system which produce indisposition of body. Now this indisposition is produced by the operation of the mind ; and inasmuch as the soul has, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, power over the mind, and can by religious discipline bring it into holy subjection to the Spirit of God, it is in my power to correct this defect of Christian character. St. Paul said, we glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; it is therefore not only possible for me to submit to it with humble resignation to the will of my great Creator and Benefactor, but also to contemplate it with thankfulness, inasmuch as it will, if rightfully improved, contribute to my spiritual advantage. I must resort

1st. To prayer. 2d. Exercise benevolence towards the individual who occasions these untoward feelings. 3d. Be resigned ; be submissive ; be humble. Do all that Christian prudence and industry can suggest, and leave the rest to God. A Christian, it is said, cannot enjoy himself if he does not at the same time enjoy his God, because the springs of patience are hid with God.

It is said of Luther whatever opposition he found, whatever distemper he found in his mind, or distraction in his soul ; he at once carried it to the throne, and never gave over praying till he prayed his heart into the right frame.

The state of the body sometimes affects the mind, but not the moral condition of the soul ; the nervous system is much disturbed by the weather or by the health of the body ; if the weak, the almost unmeaning, irresolute state of the mind, arising from these causes, were chargeable to the moral and religious account of man, he might well be discouraged ; he would often be tempted to think that God's grace did not afford him the strength necessary to his Christian character ; but blessed be God, this is not so, he considers he knows that the

immortal soul, which is connected with the body, is liable to various corporal and mental affections, which are inseparable from the peculiar organization of man; and which it is impossible for the soul to escape by any moral power it possesses. All that is required of man, is to exert the moral faculties of his soul, and rely upon the grace of the Holy Spirit for the rest; his feelings will be unequal. They will savor of his corporal nature, of his nervous system; but this is not impiety, it is not attributable to any defect in his religious character.

Gracious Parent, enable me to distinguish clearly between unholy affections and human affections, between the body and the soul.

April 20, 1841.

THY WILL BE DONE.

While the Christian continues an evil affection, he resists the will of his heavenly Father.

When he prays against sin, let him at the same time recollect how great and good a Being he offends by continuing in it. This consideration will tend to subdue his impure affections; he cannot displease that Being whom he loves, and to whom he is indebted for all things. Gracious Parent, enable me, therefore, to guard against all uncleanness, and when I am tempted to do any thing whatever, let me inquire whether it is pleasing to God; and if it be not, let me shun it as I would the most deadly poison.

April 23, 1841.

Is. 26 : 3.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee. I trust in thee, give me inward peace. I will not trust in the arm of flesh: I will have no carnal reliance.

This is what thou requireth of me, shall I do it? O yes.

On board Steamboat, April 27, 1841.

My principal anxiety is for a clean heart—to be perfect in the sight of God. I do not appear to be fighting for a reward in the kingdom of heaven so much as for a clean heart here on

the earth. I certainly thirst after righteousness, and I rely upon God that I shall be filled. Let me set a watch over all my imperfections—let me observe strictly both truth and justice.

April 29, 1841.

I have heretofore felt justified in the sight of God, but I seem to want now more satisfactory evidence that I am progressing successfully in the road to heaven. I greatly desire a pure heart. O renew a right spirit within me! I will not entertain an evil thought for one moment. I will, the grace of God assisting me, instantly thrust it out. O for a more perfect evidence that God is satisfied with me, that my sins are pardoned, that I have availed myself of that blood which was spilt on Calvary.

May 1, 1841.

I am now fully satisfied that religion must be the first, the principal business of my life, and that the cares of the world must be secondary. If the cares of the world are the principal object, then I shall serve mammon more than God, and consequently I shall not experience any of the comforts or support which the Gospel affords to the truly penitent disciple of Christ. I will, therefore, think more of God, and less of the world. It shall be my business to serve God with all my heart, and take much less care about the world than I have heretofore done.

May 5, 1841.

PEEVISHNESS—FRETFULNESS—IMPATIENCE.

Great and Eternal God, deliver me from these distressing, unmanly vices. They are offences against God—they are displeasing in his sight—they bring me into disrepute with men. May I be continually on my guard against them, and endeavor to shun the very first symptom of them. I feel that the grace of God will, if I am faithful, be my constant safeguard.

ANGER.

I have often fallen into this sin ; and I have met somewhere with this advice. When a Christian feels this diabolical temper rising up, let him neither say or do any thing till he has repeated the first petition in our Lord's prayer, to wit : *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us ;* for if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father forgive us our trespasses.

HYMN 178.

Whene'er the angry passions rise,
And tempt our thoughts or tongues to strife,
To Jesus let us lift our eyes,
Bright Pattern of the Christian life.

O how benevolent and kind,
How mild, how ready to forgive !
Be this the temper of our mind,
And these the rules by which we live.

A Christian, says a pious author, should be moderate in all his actions, in all his expressions. When unholy affections, or wicked sentiments, are exhibited or advanced in his presence and hearing, he must not allow himself to become excited or to lose that just ballast of the mind which is produced by Christian humility. Upon such occasions his soul is in danger, a double watch is required ; this is the moment for the exercise of humility, forbearance, and charity. The Divine Spirit now dictates great caution, lowliness of mind, meekness and gentleness, as the means to protect the disciple of Christ from falling into sin. To do any thing to add to the excitement of an angry man is clearly sinful—his feelings should be soothed before an appeal is made to his reason. If this cannot be done, it is better to change the subject of conversation. In the Christian's expression of his opinion of men or measures, let him beware of intemperance, or excess of feeling, or of uncharitableness. We should be clearly right before we unequivocally condemn, and then express our ideas with moderation and charity.

Sunday, June 27, 1841.

I am seeking for a patient, a submissive spirit. I am determined never to cease my exertions in this respect until I prevail with God. He has promised to give whatever is asked in faith. I know he will vouchsafe it to me at the last. My disposition and habits are against me, but God is on my side. I will not fear the result. The springs of patience are hid in God. Let my moderation be known to all men. James 1 : 1. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her handiwork, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give.

August 1, 1841.

FORTITUDE AND FIRMNESS.

I set out this day to beseech God by prayer to give me more firmness of character ; more unyielding firmness ; more religious stability. And now, O God, I look unto thee—of my own strength I can do nothing ; but in thee, gracious Parent, I can do all things. I rely upon thy grace : I ask of thee in faith. I will daily and hourly persevere in this great object. It is to do thy will, O my God, that I ask strength of thee, through Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. Let me deliberate, let me ask wisdom of thee ; and, when I know the right, let me pursue it without deviation, without halting.

In giving character, or recommendations to men, I must be careful.

I have written a recommendation to a man who is an applicant for an office. I fear I have not had sufficient regard to his defects of character. I will hereafter, with the grace of God, be extremely scrupulous and careful in this particular. I pray God to give me firmness, and inspire me with justice, and a strict regard to truth. *December, 1841.*

Sunday, January 30, 1842.

I bless God this day, that he has enabled me, during the last week, to eat my meals with prudence ; that he hath also greatly prospered my affairs, so that my mind is free from worldly cares ; and I will endeavor this day to devote myself wholly to my great Benefactor.

All is well, says a pious writer. All is well with the child of grace : all is ill with the unregenerated man.

But never can we say, All is well when we have not a lively faith in Christ our Saviour. When faith sinks, then it is not well with the Christian.

JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME.

We are directly responsible to God for the improper exercise of our reason ; let me, therefore, be extremely careful not to express an opinion which is not properly supported by my best judgment. It is much better to express no opinion than one that is erroneous. Let me never be hasty, but deliberate in all my words and actions.

AFFLICTION.

Afflictions that are consequent upon vice we ought to suffer. There is much selfishness in our nature. Sin is often deeply seated, and must be sought out with great diligence and fervent prayer for divine teaching. This divine *teaching* is attended with so much affliction, so much pain as becomes necessary thoroughly to probe the wound. Nothing short of affliction will often affect this great purpose of our heavenly Father. The righteous man considers all his afflictions in the hands of God ; and he is satisfied that whatever is for the best will be done. It is God's hand ; let him do what seemeth best, I am safe. *All is well*. He that walketh uprightly, walketh securely, even in the path of disaster.

PERFECT PEACE.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. The man who walks closely with God realizes its blessings continually. He that is constant has no dark moments

—all is light with him. Sin occasions despondency. A good man will never be moved. He is not afraid of any evil tidings, and mere imaginary evils take no hold on him. His reliance is on the Rock of Ages. His great object is holiness of heart, and sin alone is capable of giving him trouble. A good man looks habitually to God as well in adversity as prosperity. He considers death and eternity at hand.

Sunday, February 6, 1842.

I complain of lukewarmness, of a want of zeal. I am half disposed to think of worldly matters rather than to devote myself exclusively to God, which I know to be my duty during this day. I feel that it is easy to relapse into sin, to savor of things of time and sense; but to walk closely with God requires continual vigilance. To watch, to pray, and to strive are indispensable to my growth in grace. Lord God, for Christ's sake, warm my heart this morning! O inspire me with more zeal, more earnestness in the road to heaven! Enable me to devote myself exclusively to thee. I am not sufficiently alienated from the love of wealth, the love of consequence, the desire to be popular: these are my besetting sins. O that God would deliver me from them!

Sunday, February 13, 1842.

I feel this morning that I have neglected my religious duties. I have not been sufficiently vigilant. I have omitted private prayer. My soul is now left to mourn over its barren condition. O God, enable me, for Christ's sake, to improve all my time to thy glory, and to the benefit of my immortal soul!

Sunday Morning, February 27, 1842.

I have spent this morning in devout exercise. I have heard a good sermon. My faith is lively, and my heart has been full of gratitude to God.

Sunday Morning, March 6, 1842.

I have felt a proper spirit of devotion and reliance upon God.

I have realized that it is not a vain thing to rely with humble submission and meekness upon an allwise Providence. The following passage of Scripture occurred to me while I was in church, to wit: "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, &c.

The consolation of grace is unknown to sinners.

I have heard a very good sermon from a son of the late Bishop Hobart. I think this young man promises to be a very impressive and successful minister of the Gospel.

Sunday Morning, April 24, 1842.

ANXIETY FOR WORLDLY APPROBATION.

This feeling has occasionally disturbed me; and it is altogether unworthy of a disciple of Christ.

We ought to regard the opinions of men only so far as they tend to correct our faults. When we are censured for some alleged error, it behooves us to inquire without selfishness or partiality, whether the censure be just; and if it be so, we should not desire a different opinion; we ought forthwith to repent and reform, or to make amends to an injured party.

If the censure be undeserved, we shall stand justified before God, and the truth will ultimately prevail to the firmer establishment of our moral and religious character. So I will bless my heavenly Father, for either a good or an evil report, as they are equally designed to improve a child of grace. Indeed I feel at this moment disposed to bless God for every thing; my very soul weeps for joy at the reflection of the abundant mercy of my Redeemer.

New-York, Tuesday, April 26, 1842.

I feel this morning the necessity of giving up the world to a greater extent than heretofore, and of placing my affections chiefly upon eternal things. In regard to worldly losses or gains—to the respect or disrespect of men, they are indeed shadows compared with an interest in the kingdom of Heaven.

O, that my gracious parent would enable me this morning to conquer these bitter enemies of my soul!

With God's grace, I determine now fully to accomplish this great object. Let the present world sink down before me, and that which is to come rise, and continue to rise, till I become an acceptable servant of the living God through Jesus Christ my Redeemer.

New-York, Sunday, May 1, 1842.

I have heard two good sermons; one from Mr. Mines, the other from Mr. Higby; and have been occupied with an important subject to me.

Let your conversation be in heaven. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The necessity of living by faith; to have our lives hid in Christ with God; to determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, &c., &c., is obvious to the Christian; he feels the constant necessity of walking closely with God; his happiness, even in this life, depends upon his treasures being in heaven. If our affections be on temporal things, we shall continually savor of the world; we shall never be satisfied, something will still be wanting. The religion of the Gospel must be all in all. We are constantly reminded by surrounding objects, of our near approach to the end of this life; and if our treasures are here, we must be miserable indeed. Our blessed Father hath so ordered it in his eternal wisdom, that our duty and happiness do proceed step by step.

Great God, let me know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Sunday, May 8, 1842.

I have had trouble for the last two days, and I have suffered somewhat in mind; but I have committed an error in this trust—that I have not in my affliction sufficiently besought God for direction and deliverance. I have looked chiefly to men. Now, for this error, I deserve to suffer, and God, my heavenly father, has so ordained it for my good, to bring me to

the foot of the Cross ; to teach me that my only reliance should be on the living God, and not on the arm of flesh.

Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Bring me to the Savior's feet,
Lay me low and keep me there.

June 4, 1842.

I have observed some professed Christians to-day indulging in an idle curiosity in respect to the affairs of others ; they seemed to be busy-bodies, prying into matters in which they had no concern.

Their questions were numerous, and rather annoying. I verily believe that a Christian should deal altogether in essentials—in things in which he has either a spiritual, or a temporal interest ; and that, if the grace of God has done its perfect work in the heart, that he will cease to busy himself with the affairs of others, unless his purpose is clearly benevolent. Gracious Parent, preserve me at all times from errors of this description.

July 3, 1842.

I find that the pride of personal consequence has not been wholly eradicated from my soul ; that I am jealous of inattention ; and that this sinful affection has occasioned to-day, some uneasiness in my mind. Sin always punishes itself ; and it is indeed a blessed provision of my Heavenly Father that it should be so ; for it leads me to the throne of grace. O that God, for Christ sake, would deliver me from this unholy affection ! I am striving to be a true servant of the living God, and this foolish pride is unworthy of the character I aspire to. The following are just deductions on this subject : If I deserved the attention which was withheld from me, then I was justified before God ; if I was unworthy of it, then, as a just man, I ought not to have coveted that to which I was not entitled ; in any event, therefore, I am not injured ; and moreover, the occurrence has, I trust, been beneficial to my immortal soul ; it has detected this lurking, sinful affection in my breast ; and it has led me to the foot of the Cross, where alone I can obtain that grace which will purify my heart. In this way I must con-

template every transaction or relation with my fellow men ; if I am right, I stand justified before the judge of all the earth ; if wrong, it is just and proper I should suffer ; and this suffering will, if rightfully improved, work to my advancement in the road to heaven.

Sunday, July 10, 1842.

I found on the 9th instant the remains of envy or jealousy in respect to the prosperity of another rising up in my breast, and occasioning an uneasiness of mind, which convinced me that I still entertained an unwarrantable love of the world. (Sin always begets trouble.) And now to-day I have been engaged in prayer to God, that he would remove this impure affection from my soul. And I have been led, by the grace of God, into a train of profitable reflection on this subject. (In time prepare for eternity.) It is certain that worldly treasures, even while possessed, are attended with evil consequences as well as good ; but the very short time that I can enjoy them renders them of very little consequence to me. In the course of thirty years at the utmost, and, perhaps, before the end of this year, month or week, I shall be laid in the grave, and these arms and hands, that are now so dear and familiar to me, will be disposed of by the side of my body, and they, together with my whole frame, will rot and turn to dust. They will remain until the resurrection day, and possibly for thousands of years, without motion, in the silent grave : and where will my immortal soul be during this long period, and to all eternity ? (In life prepare for death.) Now is the time to purify the heart. The day of grace is still given to me. This unholy affection, this impure state of my heart, this unwarrantable love of the world, is displeasing to God, my Redeemer. And shall I indulge it any longer ? O no. Heavenly Father, cleanse my heart. O, for Christ's sake, purge it now, that I may never hereafter experience this foul affection. Even my happiness in this life depends on the purity of my heart. (Sin always occasions trouble.) There is no fear, saith the Lord unto the wicked. The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

1 Tim. 4 : 8.—For godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Chap. 6 : 6.—For godliness, with contentment, is great gain ; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out ; and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Chap. 6 : 11.—But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Chap. 6 : 17.—Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

July 30, 1842.

I have, during the past night, become fully satisfied of a defect in my Christian character, which I determine, by the assistance of divine grace, to amend and correct. I have, for many years past, suffered my feelings, and moreover my indignation, to be much excited and indulged on many political subjects, but more especially on religious topics, and against the doctrine of the limited atonement. I am aware that I have often expressed myself intemperately to professing Christians, who held this doctrine as against their sentiments. I am now persuaded that I have been wrong in the indulgence of these feelings ; and that they have been unbecoming the character of a meek and lowly follower of Jesus Christ.

I have often been led to consider, whether I had not, during the time of these discussions, lost sight of the character of Christian love and charity, and also lost, for the time being, my cast as a disciple of Christ. I apprehend that this has been so. And I feel now (blessed be God for it) deeply impressed with this error in my Christian character ; and I determine, not in my own strength, but in a firm reliance upon God, my Saviour, to suppress hereafter all such feelings ; and

in place thereof to exercise love and prayer for my Christian brethren, whom I consider to be misguided in their construction of this doctrine of the blessed Gospel.

And now, Holy Father, for Christ's sake, give me more of thy Divine Spirit of benevolence and charity; and enable me to perform and keep this resolution, now here made in thy presence.

I am satisfied that this harsh and uncharitable spirit was one of Luther's besetting sins, and that his character as a disciple of Christ, was in this particular subject to great impeachment. The controversy, as conducted between him and Erasmus, was highly disgraceful to the cause of Christ. Melancthon was almost the only Reformer of that day, whose character for gentleness, forbearance, and Christian benevolence, was truly that of a Christian; there was, in general, an acrimonious asperity of character about these Reformers, which was extremely censurable.

Sectarian disputes are generally conducted with excited feelings of a character hostile to the mild spirit of Christian love and charity; they are never productive of good, but almost always of evil. That man, says the author of a work on fanaticism, who continually entertains a due sense of the awful justice of God, as the necessary condition of that purity which is essential to the Divine nature, and who sees his own peril in the light of Divine justice, is thenceforth mainly occupied with those emotions of shame and fear which are proper to a culprit, and has no wish to make a vindictive application of God's justice upon the errors of others. I will not, hereafter, spend my precious time in discussions, wholly unessential to the salvation of my immortal soul. Great and eternal God, give me strength of purpose to perform and keep this resolution.

August 7, 1842.

A friend, yesterday, suggested to me that he had himself observed, and he had heard it said by another, that my descriptions of men and things, and of my own affairs, had led some persons to overrate the objects and concerns spoken of by me;

and that I was not sufficiently circumspect; or that I had not sufficiently observed the exact truth in those matters.

I regard this communication to have been made to me in a most friendly spirit; and I fear it is not without foundation, although I stand acquitted of intentional error; but I now here determine, by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ my Redeemer, to correct myself in these matters; and to keep and observe the exact truth in all my statements. Great and eternal God, thou seest me now! O strengthen, and assist me! and enable me to speak with more care and circumspection, and a more strict regard to facts, than I have heretofore done.

August 20, 1842.

GLOOMY APPREHENSIONS.

These, as I have heretofore observed, are amongst the evils to which I am subject. They in a great degree yield to the discipline of the mind; if we give way to them, they increase upon us and render us miserable indeed,—if we resist them, they have comparatively little effect. The natural man may, by the ordinary strength of his faculties, do much towards their conquest, but he that adds to these, christian fortitude and christian resolution, will accomplish much more. St. Paul said he could do all things, Christ strengthening him. This strength of Christ, or the grace of God, comes by prayer. My trust therefore shall be in the everlasting God. I will not fail to exert my natural faculties, but I will also pray for grace to enable me to accomplish this desirable object. I will never again, by the help of the Almighty, yield to those unmanly, unchristianlike affections.

And now, gracious Parent, thou seest me. This resolution is taken in thy sight, and I rely on thee for its accomplishment. And I beseech thee, for Christ's sake, to vouchsafe to me, at all times hereafter, the influence of thy grace, that I may be enabled to perform and keep this determination now here made in thy presence.

Sunday, Sept. 24, 1842.

I want the facility of casting myself at once into a frame of

mind which shall contemplate, with holy reverence, God's attribute of infinite justice, and my extreme sinfulness and impurity, so that I may entertain a proper emotion of fear and submission to the great Eternal, and be led with humble confidence to the foot of the Cross for pardon and reconciliation. In my family devotion, this morning, I was sensible of a want of that blessed frame of mind, and in place of it I was troubled with a vapid and uncollected feeling, altogether unfitted to profitable devotion.

I now desire to repent before God on account of this defect of my christian character. Lord God, I beseech thee, for Christ's sake, to inspire me continually with a due sense of this holy attribute of thy divine nature, and of my own unworthiness before thee.

ENTHUSIASM.

I have found myself indulging in ideas that I am satisfied are enthusiastic; such, for example, as that my temporalities have been vouchsafed to me as a special favor from Heaven. God governs the world by general laws; cause produces effect; the sun rises on the evil and on the good, and the rain falls on the just and on the unjust. It is therefore erroneous to suppose that special providences attend a religious man in his worldly affairs, in opposition to the general laws of the universe. It is nevertheless true that religion tends to promote our happiness in this life, not only by qualifying us to endure misfortunes, and teaching us prudence and frugality, but by inspiring us with a well founded hope of eternal happiness beyond the grave.

The author of a treatise on enthusiasm says: "it is a perverted notion of religion, that leads a man to think that he is such a peculiar favorite of the eternal Jehovah, as presumptuously to suppose that God's providences will produce in his favor an irregularity in the permanent and fixed laws of the moral universe. This is supposing that, notwithstanding the great God has ordained that a certain cause shall produce a certain effect, yet that, in his particular instance, such a cause shall not produce such an effect; or in other words, it is calling

on God to work a miracle in his particular case. I know a professing Christian who informed me that he expected to get a certain price for a house and lot of ground, and he believed the Lord would find him a purchaser at that price. This man relied not upon the natural and probable operation of things, but upon a special interposition of Divine providence in his favor.

He finally sold the property in question greatly below the price which he flattered himself he would obtain for it. It is hoped that the disappointment in question may have led him to the detection of this undoubted error in his Christian exercises. The necessity of distinguishing between the false light of the imagination and the realities of the Gospel, is abundantly obvious to the intelligent Christian. Religion, being a work of the heart and not of the head, resolves itself into realities, and mere phantoms of the brain lead to enthusiasm, and to errors of a dangerous character. The religionist, who relies for his salvation upon mere form and ceremony, or upon the pageantry of priestcraft, and the fatalist, who put his eternal interest on imaginary decrees in his favor, are equally deluded on the momentous concerns of eternity. Lord God, deprive the Christian world of every thing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

The doctrines of the Gospel do not teach us that our temporal interests are to be advanced by subverting the general order of God's laws, or by miraculous interpositions of his providence. Cause is to follow effect. He that does not seek shall not find ; he that doth not sow shall not reap, and to him that doth not knock, the door shall not be opened. Our success, as well in temporal as spiritual things, is, by the wise providence of God, and through the blessed provisions of the atonement, made to depend on the use of means. By industry and frugality, we provide for this life, and by prayer and religious circumspection, for that which is to come.

I admit, however, that there are matters not in their nature subject to these laws, and which God in his providence does constantly control ; and these relate to what is vulgarly called

chance, and to the operation of the Divine Spirit on the heart and affections of men. "God has promised to the subject of his grace, that he will work in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure. And the reasons of the Divine conduct towards those who are in training for an endless course, must always be at an infinite distance beyond the range of created vision. Who shall venture even to surmise what course of events may best foster the germ of an imperishable life? Whether the promise that all things shall work together for good to those who love God, is to be accomplished by perpetual sunshine or by incessant storms, no one can anticipate in his own case."

"Amid the perplexities which arise from the unexpected events of life, we are not left without sufficient guidance; for, although in particular instances the most reasonable calculations are baffled and the best plans subverted, yet there remains in our hands the immutable rule of moral rectitude, in an inflexible adherence to which we shall avoid what is chiefly to be dreaded in calamity, the dismal moanings of a wounded conscience."

"He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, even in the path of disaster ; and, while on the one hand, he steadily pursues the track which common prudence marks out, and on the other, listens with respectful attention to the dictates of honor and probity, he may, without danger of enthusiasm, ask and hope for the especial aids of divine Providence in overruling those events, which lie beyond the reach of human agency. Prayer and calculation are duties never incompatible, never to be disjoined, and never to shackle one another. A strange incongruity may seem to present itself when the sons of God, the heirs of immortality, the destined princes of heaven, are seen implicated in sordid cares, and vexed and oppressed by the perplexities of a moment; but this incongruity is only perceived when the great facts of religion are viewed in the false light of imagination; for the process of preparation, far from being incompatible with these apparent degradations, requires them. It is by such means of humiliation that the hope of immortality is bound down to the heart. The Christian is

looking for the second coming of Christ; he may think that by possibility it will come even in his own time; and this thought may animate him to fresh exertions in the road to heaven, without leading him to any fanatical conclusions. Whatever may happen to him, all is safe, all is well, and will be so to all eternity."

"SON, DAUGHTER, GIVE ME THY HEART.

"In order (says the author of a Treatise on Enthusiasm) that the warmth and vigor of life may be maintained in the heart, the common level of the natural affections is chosen as the scene of intercourse between heaven and earth. The region of abstract conceptions, of lofty reasonings, of magnificent images, has an atmosphere too subtle to support the health of true piety. God dwells with the man who is of an humble and contrite spirit; the afflictions of the righteous man are intended to bring his religious belief and emotions in close contact with the humiliations of animal life, and thus to beget the necessity of prayer; the process of preparation requires affliction, and it is by it that the hope of immortality is bound down to the heart." The industrious disciple will find, after some few months have passed away, upon an examination of his heart and affections before the Great Judge, that, by the assistance of Divine grace, he has made obvious improvements in his Christian character. The duty of prayer will have become much more lovely—he will have little or no dull time on his hands—he can fill it up with precious communications to the Throne of Divine grace—his love for all men will have increased. He will be enabled to contemplate his enemies with more charity and compassion, and to pray for them with more sincerity of heart. He will exercise more forbearance towards such as trespass against him than formerly. He will have more firmness, moderation and deliberation of character, a gentler spirit, less of selfishness, and more of openness of heart than formerly. He will have less pride, and more resignation to the will of God. He will have ceased to speak against men, or to allow himself to render railing for railing on any occasion.

Oct. 30, 1842.

I now entertain great apprehensions as to what may be my spiritual condition on the 30th day of October, 1843. This is indeed an important inquiry to me, if God should spare my life till that day, how will my account then stand between the great Judge and my immortal soul? Shall I then have advanced or receded in that straight and narrow road that leads to life? Great God, thou seest me; these apprehensions and fears of my soul are known to thee. O, for Christ's sake, help my infirmities, and strengthen me continually in the great work which thou has given me to do.

ANIMATING THOUGHTS
FOR THE
CHILD OF GRACE.

Sunday, Nov. 27, 1842.

THE condition of the redeemed, in that future life, will be perfect happiness—a state of felicity far beyond any thing mortals can imagine, and this will endure to all eternity. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

The few years that I have to remain here, will be alloyed with pain and sorrow, and they will be mixed with affliction. But they will soon end; and perhaps before this month, or even week shall terminate, I may enter into that blessed condition of the saints of God, which shall last to all eternity. Let these thoughts now animate my soul in the work of grace. Possibly, I may yet live to witness the second coming of my Saviour Christ.

December 3, 1842.

My mind has been disturbed, and I have improperly entertained anxious thoughts for a few hours, that are past. Upon this occasion I have savored of poor human nature, and my imagination has even flashed at materialism. When my faith is inert and my energies feeble, let me consider that my great Benefactor has certainly implanted two things in my breast:

1st. A conscience that reproves me of sin, and enables me to distinguish between good and evil; and

2d. An idea of an existence beyond the grave.

Thus much nature has done, and the Holy Scriptures come in and do the rest. They prescribe and point out not only the exact rule of justice, but the road to holiness and eternal

life. The great principles of justice are uniform, and prevail in the millions of worlds that compose the universe; but man, who savors of materialism, can only reason from what he sees and hears in one small planet. His thoughts are not as God's thoughts, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the thoughts of the Almighty above those of feeble man.

With the disciple of Christ, human wisdom is unworthy of notice.

The natural man, says a pious author, is, by the Divine economy, limited in his knowledge of the universe, and even of himself. Seclusion, in reference to him, is to a certain extent the law of the Supreme Governor, and the Holy Scriptures maintain consistency with the apparent intention of the Creator of the material universe, by the parsimony of their revelation, in abstaining from the conveyance of any particle of knowledge which is not strictly connected with the interest and notion of human virtue.

Christianity is a well digested and premeditated act of the Divine government, and therefore maintains strictly the secrecy of the awful Mistress of Creation, nor utters a syllable of loose or gratuitous knowledge; the vail of the temple of the universal kingdom is not rent—is not raised by the coming of the Gospel. A voice from behind that vail delivers to men the brief sentences of the Divine will; the messenger from heaven does not abide with us—does not spend his leisure moments in our company; is not to be surprised by questions of curiosity in moments of complacency; he has imparted that which was given to him and is gone.

Let me therefore bless and magnify my Heavenly Father, that I have all the light and knowledge given me which are necessary to the purification of my heart, and to the attainment of eternal happiness beyond the grave.

December 7, 1842.

**PUSILLANIMOUS OR INERT FAITH, AS OPPOSED TO ACTIVE FAITH
AND MANLY ENERGY.**

The use of means is, by the economy of the Gospel dis-

pensation, rendered necessary in every step we take. Faith is, to be sure, the gift of God, but it becomes pusillanimous or inert without the exercise of the energies of man. God gives the faith, and man contributes that energy which is necessary to its healthy action in the soul. God works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, but this operation of the Holy Spirit is only vouchsafed to the man who industriously cherishes it in his heart. Faith without works is dead ; by works here, we are to understand not only such relative duties as we owe to man, but such active exertions, in connection with the gift of God, as shall produce that well of living water which springeth up to everlasting life. The sluggish Christian is a miserable being ; he is neither fit to live nor to die. Heaven delights in the bold, the energetic disciple of the Cross. Man is made for this world. The Christian is not formed in the cloister, but in society ; and faith, which is the gift of God, is to be exercised in the human heart in conjunction with its constant passions and daily incidents. And in this manner it subdues, it suppresses, it modifies, it turns to heavenly account, yea, it gleans grace and wisdom from every accident of life.

Although religion is to be the chief object of our care, yet we are not to deprive ourselves of any of the comforts or innocent amusements of life. The moment we become dull and heavy, we make poor Christians. We are to select our pleasures, (being always careful to avoid sin.)

In the due and rational operation of faith in the heart, the Christian has much to do. There is, says a pious author, something which requires to be balanced or adjusted, and kept in equipoise between the principle of faith and the principle of action. The one has a tendency to exclude the other, or overpower it, but Christian excellence consists in the preservation of this balance.

Gracious Parent, enable me to preserve and keep it in such manner as to promote the growth of genuine piety in my heart.

December 8, 1842.

I am waiting, with some uneasiness, for a knowledge of an

event that may be pleasant or vexatious to me. An untoward decision would perhaps wound my pride of opinion, and in this respect be beneficial to my immortal soul. In what manner ought it to operate on my mind? Shall I entertain a feeling of dissatisfaction or uneasiness? or shall I form plans for my future triumph, or for the gratification of malice or indignation? Certainly not. Shall I not then submit to my fate with humility and Christian resignation? Most undoubtedly. I must not allow it to occasion a hostile or even an unpleasant feeling towards any one whomsoever, but I must, with Christian equanimity, pursue a mild, gentle and heavenly course.

December 21, 1842.

Neither cowardice nor indolence belong to a Christian. He hath much less to fear, and much more to animate him than the careless sinner.

With him all is well. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, even in the path of disaster. He fears no evil tidings, for God is with him. If God be with us, who shall be against us.

December 25, 1842.

In respect to moral and religious truths, it is greatly to be apprehended that the world at large are fearfully deficient. Even those who are striving to improve their condition in this respect, find many impediments or temptations to interrupt their progress and to draw them aside from that straight and narrow road that leads to eternal life. These, however, are for the most part on subjects not immediately relative to the moral and religious improvement of the heart.

The great doctrines of the revealed religion should be well settled in the mind of the disciple of Christ. They are as follows:—

1. That there is one true and living God, the creator of all mankind, and that Jesus Christ is his only son.
2. That man has been created a moral agent, responsible

for sin, and is to be punished or rewarded to all eternity, in the world of spirits.

3. That having fallen from his first estate, a Saviour has been provided for him, who, for the purpose of making an atonement for our sins, came into this lower world, and took upon him our nature, and suffered and died on the Cross, to redeem from the curse of a broken law all who should come to God through him.

4. That by this means (and no other,) salvation is proffered to every child of Adam, however poor, ignorant or degraded he may be; the souls of each of whom are of infinite value in the sight of the Eternal God, inasmuch as they must exist to all eternity in a state of bliss or misery beyond the grave.

5. That man, being a member of society, has to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, midst all the vicissitudes of life; this being the only school in which his soul can become qualified for endless bliss.

That these important truths become sometimes obscure in the mind, by reason of the false light of the imagination, is undoubtedly true.

Man being mortal savors of materialism, and is often tempted to assimilate the great concerns of the spirit to his mere animal nature, and thus to produce doubts and difficulties in that straight and narrow road that leads to life.

I pray God to give me wisdom at all times hereafter, to detect this false light of the imagination, and to distinguish it clearly from the true light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to know—

First, That the great and eternal Spirit is in no respect like sinful man. He hath no mortal body, no passions, no imperfections, nor habits like ours.

We must not, therefore, allow the imagination to assimilate to man any thing appertaining to the everlasting God; but must constantly look up to the throne of His grace, with fearful reverence and humble submission to His divine will; and,

Secondly, That the Holy Scriptures fully establish the fact that every sin we commit in thought, word or deed, (unless

atoned for by the death of Christ,) is to be punished eternally in the world of spirits to which we are hastening. And we must not therefore permit the false light of the imagination to suggest the possibility of the Divine favor through any other medium than the atoning blood of Christ.

And *Thirdly*, Perhaps there is no one subject (upon which the false light of the imagination, under the baneful influence of materialism, has done more despite to the Gospel,) than that of the humanity, life, suffering and death of our blessed Saviour upon this earth. Our corrupt nature has always tended to assimilate the divine person of Christ to the frail body of man. We do not sufficiently consider that this glorious body was produced by a miracle—that in its association with the spirit of Christ, while here, it was never polluted by sin, that it did not see corruption, but ascended into heaven, where it is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

It cannot therefore be assimilated to the frail and imperfect condition of man, in any of the incidents of his nature.

And *Fourthly*, We are to consider that every child of Adam, however poor, mean or degraded he may be, has an immortal soul, which is of more value in the sight of the Eternal God, than all the riches of the universe; and that it is only by the false light of the imagination that we undervalue this germ of immortality.

Gracious Parent, enable me at all times hereafter to put a just estimate on this immeasurable treasure.

And *Fifthly*, That the soul of man is trained for a blessed immortality midst all the trials, passions and vicissitudes of life; this being the only school in which it can become qualified for endless happiness beyond the grave.

His exertions, therefore, in this life, to secure to himself and others the provisions of the Gospel, are infinitely more important than all the world beside.

IMPROPER INFLUENCE OF THE IMAGINATION.

I am satisfied that by giving way to the wild play of the imagination, we injure both our intellectual and moral powers; and that by reading fictitious narratives we often impair that

harmony which ought to exist between the moral emotion and the consequent beneficial action of man. "For," says Dr. Abercrombie, in his *Treatise on the Intellectual Powers*, "In the healthy state of the moral feelings, the emotion of sympathy excited by a tale of sorrow, ought to be followed by some effort to relieve the distressed; and when such emotions are excited without such effort, the emotion becomes weakened; and that the imagination, to be useful, must be kept under the strict control of both reason and virtue; for if it be allowed to wander at discretion through the scenes of imagined wealth, ambition, frivolity, pleasure, trouble, pain, distress or anguish, it tends to withdraw the mind from the important pursuits of life, to weaken the habit of attention, and to impair the judgment. And in such cases, false opinions often fasten upon the mind with as much tenacity as real truth. And, moreover, it is a moral duty not to suffer ourselves to be misguided either in respect to pleasure or pain, by the false light of the imagination. The disciple of Christ should deal in realities, and not in fanciful delusions. The imagination should never be uselessly employed, as upon subjects that can turn to no good account. And herein it must not be allowed to dwell on gloomy or painful subjects, which promise no good results. The most unreasonable employment of the imagination is in the indulgence of a dark state of the mind in reference to the condition of our temporal concerns. There is no subject on which the false light of the imagination does more harm than this—by such means the mind is often troubled and perplexed, when it should be exclusively engaged in the devout exercises of religion.

"The mind must never brood over misfortunes or errors that are past, and that cannot be recalled or relieved by means of such reflections. We must repent of our sins, but not of unintentional errors, nor must the mind be permitted to dwell on injuries that we have received from our fellow beings, or to indulge in malignant or hostile feelings, or in the invention of means of retaliation upon an enemy."

In all these cases our Heavenly Father has given us the means of subduing these improper wanderings of the imagi-

nation, which is by prayer, accompanied by faith and manly energy. This will never fail of a blessed result; and will effectually subdue, conquer and vanish these enemies of man.

January 7, 1843.

For a few days past a heavy defalcation has been reported to have taken place in a monied institution in this city, in which I have no interest, nor am I conscious of entertaining any other feeling than benevolence towards a single stockholder in this company; yet I am constrained to confess that I have heard this report not only without any feelings of regret, but perhaps rather with secret satisfaction. Now, I have been led to inquire, from what such a feeling can originate, and I am satisfied it is of a censurable character. It has its origin in a love of novelty, of excitement, or, of what is still worse, the remains of the foul passion of envy, which desires to level the opulent citizen to a condition of mediocrity. This shows me that my affections are altogether too much on worldly goods, on worldly consequence, &c.

The human heart is often sly, selfish, and desperately wicked. It is difficult, very difficult, to find out all the secret lurking places of sin.

Lord God, I acknowledge this morning, before thee, the depravity of my heart and affections, in this newly discovered sin. I repent of it before thee, gracious Parent. O, for Christ's sake, purge my heart from this unclean affection. It is displeasing to thee—it ought not therefore to be continued for a single moment.

January 15, 1843.

MISIMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

I have spent much time in unprofitable musing, in my placid moments. When the tide of life appeared to flow smoothly, I have passed many hours in the contemplation of my worldly prosperity, in the vain anticipation of unalloyed happiness. This habit I now perceive to be not only unprofitable, but sinful. My experience has taught me that trouble is the lot of man. "Man never *is*, but always *to be* blessed."

He that seeks happiness in any thing short of the religion of the Gospel, is sure to be disappointed. This sinful indulgence is always followed by gloomy and desponding moments. The false light of the imagination harrows up the mind with many anticipations of trouble and misfortune, till the utter fallacy of earthly pleasures becomes abundantly obvious.

I now determine, by the assistance of Divine grace, never thus sinfully to spend my precious time.

Great and eternal God, for Christ's sake, enable me hereafter instantly to check all indulgences of this character, and in place thereof enable me to entertain heavenly meditations. These reward, animate and strengthen the follower of the Lamb, in the straight and narrow road that leads to life.

January 28, 1843.

IMPATIENCE, TOO MUCH EXCITABILITY.

These are defects in my character, with which I have labored all my life. A day scarcely passes over my head without something to regret in this respect. They occur more frequently in the trial of causes, and also in respect to matters in which I have a personal interest. And although I have frequently regretted their recurrence, yet I have never in good earnest set about reforming my life and conduct in these particulars.

I now determine, by the assistance of Divine grace, to be particularly watchful and circumspect in these matters, and to pray for the spirit of forbearance, patience and brotherly kindness, in place of these hasty and sinful emotions which are always improperly indulged.

Gracious Parent, deliver me from this evil. O, for Christ's sake, give me at all times, and under all circumstances hereafter, that Christian fortitude, meekness and gentleness, which belongs to a true disciple of the Cross.

UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE TO MEN.

The Christian religion inspires this feeling; and its divine influence upon the heart and affections is of so heavenly a

character, that it affords of itself strong proof of the truth of the Gospel. It should always be present, and always operative upon the human mind. Doctor Abercrombie, in his *Treatise on Moral Philosophy*, has the following comment:—

“Benevolence,” says he, “is to be exercised towards the feelings of others; and this applies to many situations in which neither their interest nor their character is concerned. It includes those exercises of the kindly affections which produce so powerful an influence in all the relations of life, but which it is impossible for any description to delineate. It comprehends all our social and civil connections, but seems peculiarly to belong to our intercourse with inferiors and dependents. Its most anxious exercise may often relate merely to trifles, but it extends to innumerable circumstances in which we may surrender our own feelings to those of others, and our own convenience or gratification to theirs. It implies solicitude to avoid wounding the feelings by pride, selfishness, or fretfulness, by suspicions, imputations and jealousies, or by allowing insignificant things to ruffle the temper and derange the social comfort. Many, who are not deficient in what we usually call deeds of benevolence, are too apt to forget, that a most important exercise of true benevolence consists in the habitual cultivation of courtesy, gentleness and kindness; and that on these dispositions often depends our influence upon the comfort and happiness of others, in a greater degree than on any deeds of actual beneficence. To this department, also, we may refer the high character of the peace-maker, whose delight it is to allay angry feelings, even when he is in no degree personally interested, and to bring together as friends and brethren those who have assumed the attitude of hatred and revenge.

“Benevolence is to be exercised in regard to the moral degradation of others, including their ignorance and vice. This prevents us from deriving satisfaction from moral evil, even though it should contribute to our advantage, as might often happen from the misconduct of rivals or enemies. It implies also that highest species of usefulness which aims at raising the moral condition of man, by instructing the ignorant,

rescuing the unwary, and reclaiming the vicious. This exalted benevolence will therefore also seek to extend the light of divine truth to nations that sit in moral darkness; and looks anxiously for the period when the knowledge of Christianity shall dispel every false faith, and put an end to the horrors of superstition.

1. In accordance with the preceding article, I must exercise kindly affections in all my social and civil connections, and especially towards inferiors and dependants.

2. I must surrender my own feelings (even in trifles) to those of others.

3. I must surrender my own convenience and gratification to those of others.

4. I must *be solicitous and guarded* not to wound the feelings of others ; *this* may be done by

Pride,

Selfishness or

Fretfulness, or by

Suspicious Imputations or

Jealousies.

Or by allowing insignificant things to ruffle the temper and derange the comfort of others.

I must habitually cultivate

Courtesy,

Gentleness,

Kindness.

1. I must exercise benevolence in regard to the moral degradation of others, including their *Ignorance and Vice* ; this will prevent me from deriving satisfaction from moral evil, even though it should contribute to my own advantage.

2. I must aim to raise the moral condition of others—

By instructing the ignorant,

By rescuing the unwary,

By reclaiming the vicious. I must also labor to extend the light of Divine Truth.

Feb. 20, 1843.

The contemplation of every natural truth gives rise to an emotion in the human mind which ought to lead to an act of duty towards the great Governor of the Universe, for example,

1. We contemplate God as infinitely *Great, Wise* and *Powerful*. This ought to produce a proper sense of veneration towards our great Creator, and lead us to pray in a right spirit.

2. We contemplate God as infinitely good ; and this should

inspire love and thankfulness, and produce benevolence to men.

3. We contemplate God as a moral governor of purity and justice ; and this should produce an habitual regard to his authority, and will (as such governor of purity and justice,) require a corresponding character in all his creatures.

The mind should therefore, by the faculty of *attention*, be carefully directed to all such truths as produce moral emotions tending to the growth of practical piety.

In like manner every constituent of our nature, and all our passions and affections, are to be turned to good account.

Anger, when properly restrained, produces such energetic means as tend to counteract the evil which occasioned it ; but it must always be tempered by christian moderation and christian benevolence.

Pride when confined to its legitimate end, leads to propriety of conduct, and generally to the correction of abuses in ourselves ; but it must always be modified by charity and christian benevolence.

Pity excited by proper objects, leads to the giving of such relief as is in our power, but it must always be regulated by christian prudence.

The passion of Fear leads to caution, and to protection against the day of trial.

In this manner the perfect economy of our Heavenly Father appears in all his works.

March 2, 1843.

Let me contemplate God as

Infinite in Power,

Wisdom,

Purity,

Justice, and

Love,

and as requiring man, as far as practicable, to conform himself to his attributes.

“ That man,” says a pious author, “ who continually entertains a due sense of the awful justice of God as the necessary condition of that purity which is essential to the divine na-

ture, and who sees his own peril in the light of divine justice, is thenceforth mainly occupied with those emotions of shame and fear which are proper to a culprit."

March 9, 1843.

I find that when I am in trouble, when I am under excitement, I cannot (or rather I do not) restrain myself within the bounds of strict propriety—that I do not confine myself to the exact truth—that I speak and act in haste—that I am not upon those occasions a just, wise and benevolent christian. This is a defect in my character of a most alarming nature. I have heretofore strove to correct and conquer it. My prayer to God has been for greater watchfulness, for more firmness whereby to withstand the temptations to which I am exposed on these occasions, but I have not been successful thus far. I impute my failure to my own fault, to a want of faith, and of implicit reliance on God, my Maker and Benefactor. I certainly desire to live without the commission of sin, but my corrupt nature has not been sufficiently subdued.

When my interest or my passions predominate, I have not enough of the fear of God before my eyes to awe me into submission to the divine will.

I desire to mourn before God this night, over this alarming defect of my character. I feel almost discouraged lest I should never be able to bring thoroughly into subjection to the divine will this unholy, unsanctified condition of my nature. It seems to me as if my supposed change of heart had not produced that uniform state of religious discipline which ought to characterize the life and conduct of a christian.

I will strive hereafter to lay low at the feet of my Saviour, and to beseech my Heavenly Father to give me to see the awful consequences of disregarding the admonitions of the Holy Spirit, and that there is nothing so much to be dreaded as sin against the Eternal Majesty of Heaven—that my happiness both here and hereafter will be in every respect promoted by a holy, righteous and godly life.

Sunday, March 19, 1843.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There

can be no doubt of the soundness of this maxim, even in a worldly point of view. What is just and pure is also politic; to do evil for the sake of worldly advantage or profit is impolitic. *He that commits sin swallows poison, which from that moment begins to operate.*

The consequences of sin, even in this world, are more to be dreaded than every thing else. The upright man is not afraid of evil tidings, for the Lord is with him, and who shall be against him. He that feareth the Lord trusteth in his providence: the Lord will be his help and his shield.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

Friday, May 5, 1843.

When trouble overtakes me I am too apt to flee to the world for relief, in place of looking up to the throne of the Eternal Jehovah. This has been the case with me for several days together, and God has consequently left me to suffer for this false trust without the consolation of the gospel of peace.

Shall I not now consider that in my Father's house there is bread enough and to spare? And why should I perish with hunger?

O Eternal Father! help me this morning to look unto thee aright. Lord God, for Christ's sake, help me! O touch my heart as with a living coal of fire from thine altar, that I may feel thy divine influence, and learn hereafter to look unto thee, and not to the world, for consolation and support.

Lindley Murray was much afflicted, and he says, in one of his letters, page 88 of his life, "I was often desirous, that if it were the will of Divine Providence, I might be removed from this state of trouble, and landed safely, as I hoped through infinite mercy I should be, on those happy shores where there is neither sickness nor sorrow. But I must acknowledge that this desire of being released from life and its attendant trials, was not consistent with that reverence and resignation to the will of God which are due to him from all his rational creatures. He who notices the fall of every sparrow, sees us in all our afflictions, and knows how to support us under them,

and the proper time to deliver us from their pressure ; and he will assuredly do what he knows to be best for us. From the greatest distresses good may proceed ; our spirits may receive additional refinements, and our example of pious, humble submission, may be edifying and consoling to our friends and others. I have in the course of forty years been visited with many illnesses, some of which have been very painful, and brought me near the gates of death, but I have always had the happiness to perceive that they were a necessary and salutary discipline, replete with instruction of the most important nature, and better for me than if I had enjoyed a uniform tenor of health and strength. In reflecting upon them, I have been so fully convinced of their utility, that I view them as concealed blessings, and have reason to be very grateful to Divine Providence for the mixture of bitters with the sweets of life.

“ There are many powerful reasons for our bearing with patience, resignation, and even with cheerfulness, the bodily afflictions with which we are visited. It is the will of God that we should be subject to them. Pain and death are the appointment of Divine Providence as the lot of man, and therefore to endure them with composure and reverence is our duty ; they are designed to let us see our weakness, the insufficiency of the things of time to make us happy, and the necessity of providing for a better state. They tend to refine our minds, to exalt our views, and prepare us for future happiness. These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They form a part of the punishment of sin in general, and often for particular sins. Why doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins. How light is this conviction when it is compared with what we deserve—if this joined to the other sorrows of life be all the chastisement we are to receive for our ingratitude and numerous offences, how cheerfully should it be endured, especially when the great recompense at last is contemplated ? Our afflictions or our works, how grievous or how great soever they may be, cannot indeed be a satisfaction for sin, and the ground of our acceptance by Heaven. These transcendent blessings are derived to us from

an infinitely higher source—the sacrifice and merits of the Redeemer of the world through the medium of our faith.

“These views of Divine Providence and Grace, if they are thoroughly impressed on our minds, would leave a strong tendency to reconcile us not only to our bodily afflictions, but to all the distresses and trials which the wisdom and goodness of our Heavenly Father may be pleased to appoint to us.

“Who shall venture even to surmise what course of events may best foster the germ of an imperishable life? whether the promise that all things shall work together for good to those who love God, is to be accomplished by perpetual sunshine or by incessant storms, no one can anticipate in his own case.”

June 27, 1843.

Let me learn to set loose to the world, and to withdraw my affections from its unstable and fluctuating interests.

Let me ascertain what the undue worldly attachments are which embarrass me, and alienate them from my heart with all possible diligence.

Saturday, August 26, 1843.

The providences of God are founded in wisdom; the course of nature is politic and just. In the decline of life, for example, when man feels that he is approaching the tomb, and ceases to find support and consolation in the objects connected with this life, he is led to the necessity of relying on God, on the religion of the Gospel, for comfort and support; this administers to his wants most abundantly. It not only satisfies, but in the figurative language of the Scriptures, it pours oil and wine into his soul; it blesses his declining years (not with the empty phantoms of the imagination,) but with the imperishable riches of the bread of life. Great and eternal God, for Christ's sake, supply me continually with this heavenly manna!

August 29, 1843.

When restlessness comes over me, let me begin to pray; this is the appropriate remedy. To approach the throne of the Eternal in a right spirit is altogether engrossing—it is a fearful thing to hold converse with the living God.

Oh God ! let me now be awed into entire submission to the divine will.

Give me the riches of thy grace more abundantly.

Oh give me the water of life that I may never thirst again.

Sept. 23, 1843.

May I always remember that the least deviation from truth, or any undue coloring of facts or circumstances, is not only a great sin against the eternal God, but a decided injury to the purity of my character and to my standing in the community in which I live.

Sing-Sing, Sept. 24, 1843.

I have received this morning a useful admonition, whereby I am instructed to watch and pray lest I enter into temptation. Prior to our family service I engaged in private devotion and an examination of my heart and life ; and inasmuch as my temporal affairs had during the previous week been prosperous, I felt remarkably mild, placid, and resigned to the will of heaven. I imagined myself freer from worldly attachments than usual—while in this apparently pious frame of mind, my attention was suddenly arrested by a trespass on my grounds, which immediately excited my angry feelings to an extent that I knew to be sinful. I therefore attempted by prayer to control and subdue these unhallowed feelings, but I found my efforts quite unavailing, until I discovered that the trespass in question had not been intentional, and that the injury done me was not so great as I had imagined. These facts, therefore, (and not my prayers) calmed my angry passions ; but I was immediately led into a most humiliating train of reflections on my extreme weakness and utter inability to resist or subdue this sinful emotion. But a few minutes before its occurrence my frame of mind was unusually pious and devout, and almost immediately thereafter I was brought under the complete dominion of sin ; and remained for several moments in this perturbed condition, without the ability to exercise any controlling power ; I am indeed a poor, imperfect, sinful being, possessing no strength of purpose, no stability of character, no power of

my own to resist temptation. My salvation must depend upon the merits of my blessed Saviour, who has taught us to pray that we may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil. We are hereby admonished of the danger of temptation, for after temptation comes, the danger of falling into sin is fearfully augmented.

Lord God lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.

Oct. 30, 1843.

My Heavenly Father has spared my life to see this day; and I bless his holy name that during the last twelve months I have advanced in the straight and narrow road that leads to life. I feel the spirit of benevolence in a more impressive manner than formerly; it appears to me that the peculiar efficacy of this spirit, affords of itself strong evidence of its divine origin, and of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

I pray God to preserve and keep me in the spirit of his grace, that I may continually advance in the great work of renovation committed to my charge.

Nov. 1, 1843.

Justification comes by prayer which is the act of the creature, *it* is in fact the creation of the creature; it is the means provided for us by the God we love to bring us home to himself; *it* enables us to exercise that faith which produces justifying grace.

"The justified sinner is," says Bishop McIlvaine, (*page* 149 of his Appendix to his Charge on Justification by Faith,) "properly compared to a shipwrecked mariner, escaped to a rock, over which the surges of the tempest continually beat, though he do not once lose hold upon the refuge, will be continually renewing and fastening again his grasp, as each new billow swells and menaces his ruin; so it is with the Christian, he abides in Christ not without the use of efforts of faith and means of grace, any more than he first came to Christ without them. His first coming and entering into living union with him, by an effort of faith rising in and working by prayer

'uttered or unexpressed,' he maintains that same union by the daily continuance of that same act of faith working by the same spirit of prayer; he not only maintains the union, but he preserves his sense of its reality by the same means. Let him restrain prayer for a time, and though he should not cease to be in heart a christian, but only to be a faithful christian, he ceases to possess the comforting evidence that he is in Christ, he will not feel his hold upon the rock; his confidence is gone, he knows not what billow may drown him. For his consolation then, for all that is precious in the witness of the Spirit, that he is 'in Christ Jesus,' for the preservation of his union to Christ (though not for any new justification as if the former were lost) must the christian maintain a constant renewal of his confession of daily sin, and his pleadings of the daily and perpetual intercession of the righteousness of Christ. As we have received Christ, so we are directed to walk in him."

Nov. 2, 1843.

Evil thoughts if not indulged are not sinful, "they come and go, and leave no stain behind."

New-York, Nov. 14, 1843.

EATING INDISCREETLY.

Notwithstanding my former experience and resolutions on this subject, I have not at all times resisted temptation : I have upon some occasions ate too much, and upon others I have taken things which have disagreed with me ; the consequence, in both cases, has been that my system has been disordered, and my mind rendered inactive and unfit either for business or devotion—for these sins I have suffered, I have deserved to suffer ; I feel now the kind discipline of my Heavenly Father in regard to this defect in my religious character.

I determine, therefore, at all times hereafter to forego the pleasure of eating either more food than is necessary for my sustenance, or such articles as may by possibility prove indigestible—the safe rule is this, to wit : if it be doubtful whether the article will or will not disagree with me, always to reject it ; and so if it involve a doubt whether I may or may not with impunity take more food, always to abstain from it—it is also necessary to eat slowly or with moderation ; and as I have already observed to eat every meal in the fear of God.

The Christian may improve his religious character in eating, as well as in other acts of nature ; there certainly is a just way of doing every thing. Gracious Parent, for Jesus Christ's sake, enable me to perform and keep these resolutions.

New-York, Nov. 15, 1843.

MATERIALISM.

I have visited this morning the shop of a phrenologist, where I have seen the scull bones of many human beings—these occasioned for a time a sensation bordering on Materialism ; the idea that they had once been animated by human beings, who had laughed as merrily and perhaps prayed as sincerely as myself, produced a sympathetic emotion of an unpleasant character. What is man, said I, that thou art mind-

ful of him, or the son of man that thou visiteth him ? It is not, indeed, the human body but the immortal spirit that thou regardest : the souls of each and every of these individuals are now existing in eternity. It was in the power of the Almighty to ordain the existence of an immortal soul, and that it should inhabit a mortal body. And this he did, and for this I bless and magnify his holy name ; he has also ordained that supreme love to God and universal benevolence to man, should constitute our whole duty, and for this I also bless and magnify his holy name.

These skull bones, then, had nothing to do with the invaluable portions of the men to whom they appertained ; they had no moral, no religious duties to perform ; they committed no sins ; they neither loved nor hated God or man. The dwelling-house in which Jeremy Taylor lived upon the earth, had as much to do with the responsibility of his immortal spirit, as the tenement of clay which that spirit inhabited. My immortal spirit now resides in this mortal body ; a skull bone constitutes a portion thereof ; but it possesses no consciousness—it is not this skull bone that now reasons of righteousness, temperance, and of a judgment to come : no, it is the immortal soul which is united with my body. I am indeed fearfully and wonderfully made ; but it is enough for me, that I have been deemed sufficiently important to attract the notice of my Heavenly Father, that my Saviour Christ hath died for me, and that I am a probationer upon the earth, with an immortal soul which is to exist to all eternity.

Lord God, enable me by thy grace, to perform and keep thy divine will for ever and ever, amen.

Sunday, Nov. 19, 1843.

TEDIOUSNESS.

I formerly found religious services irksome. I complained of long prayers, long sermons, &c., &c., but I bless God that to a great extent it is otherwise with me now. I find in gene-

ral that a service is long or short in proportion as I am devout or negligent; the truly pious man who continually breathes the spirit of the gospel, and who is intent upon the acquisition of more grace, wants every moment of his time during a religious service; with him every devout prayer and every faithful sermon, contains matter in which his immortal soul has a deep concern; his interest, therefore, in those exercises, is constantly sustained.

I find it particularly useful for me to look over every prayer, and to unite fully and sincerely with the clergyman in each and every petition which those prayers contain. This appears to me, to be one amongst others of the advantages of printed forms; by reading the form, the mind takes a fuller impression of the sense of the petition, and by deliberately uniting the understanding with the heart, the prayer becomes more efficacious. The printed forms contained in our liturgy never wear out with the evangelical Christian; with him their novelty consists in the daily increase of their efficacy upon the heart; with the mere nominal Christian this is otherwise. He attends church and reads prayers, pursuant to a stated custom; and to him the words "Dearly beloved brethren," with the admonition that follows, is an old story—it goes into one ear, and out at the other, but produces no effect upon the heart—to him stated prayers, must often be long and tedious, and if he blesses God for any thing, it is that the service is ended. How little, indeed, does such a Christian know of the religion of the blessed Gospel. While, however, (as an Episcopalian,) I express these views in respect to printed prayers, I do not undertake to condemn my christian brethren of any other denomination. I admit that the prayer of the heart is all that is required by our Heavenly Father, but in regard to myself I find that I can better accomplish this object by using the printed forms contained in our liturgy.

Gracious Parent, make me alive to every thing which appertains to the welfare of my immortal spirit.

Sunday, Nov. 26, 1834.

LIKINGS AND DISLIKINGS.

The extent to which these are indulged is often annoying to an industrious Christian. One dislikes the Rev. Mr. A., another likes the Rev. Mr. B., and a third cannot endure Doctor C. One half of the conversation which occurs after a religious service is in respect to these likings and dislikings, while the subject of vital piety, or of the religion of the heart is not even thought of; indeed to introduce such a subject would savor of a fanaticism much more offensive than either of these objects of criticism.

I know many persons who are exceedingly zealous on the subject of high and low church principles, who have no relish whatever for practical piety; they spend much time and display much zeal, in these matters, while they neglect altogether the religion of the heart. When these subjects are introduced to me by persons of this character, I endeavor to persuade the disputants of the paramount importance of vital piety, but I find that by giving this turn to conversation I greatly diminish the interest which my friends take in religious matters. It is to be feared that very many persons mistake this disposition to criticize upon men and measures, and upon doctrinal points for an evidence of zeal in the cause of religion. And although I do not consider these questions immaterial or unimportant, yet to a sinner who is in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, they are comparatively of little consequence.

I know of a truth that it is necessary for me to love righteousness, and to hate iniquity, and I pray God that I may not be permitted to spend my precious time in the indulgence of mere likings and dislikings, while I need what is infinitely more important, a deeper renovation of the heart.

December 2, 1843.

TRUTH.

According to Doctor Dick's definition, (see page 23 of this

book,) the greatest defect in my christian character is the want of strict truth in conversation, my descriptions of men and things are not always accurate. Reformation in this respect shall now be the great object of my vigilance and prayer. I feel this morning in haste for a pure heart. I pray the eternal God, for Christ's sake, to help me to accomplish this blessed work. Heavenly Father, I know thou seest me, thou knoweth that I desire sincerity of heart and conversation. My blessed Saviour hath said, "Ask and ye shall receive"—I have asked. I have (as I verily believe) asked aright; and I certainly shall receive the blessing I desire from the hands of the eternal God.

PERFECT RELIANCE ON GOD.

In every situation and under all circumstances, I must remain unmoved—I must be satisfied with my lot. In order to this blessed condition my conscience must be void of offence towards God and man; the impure man cannot with confidence cast himself upon the Almighty and rest under the shadow of his wing; he is afraid of evil tidings, for the Lord is not with him. He that feareth the Lord trusteth in his providence; the Lord is his help and his shield—he can say with David, the Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. My God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. Now I certainly do fear the Lord, and I have a right to trust in his providence. He is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. Why may I not trust in thee, gracious Parent? Why should I fear what man can do unto me? I am but an unworthy servant, but I have been accepted through the merits of my blessed Saviour. I greatly desire a pure heart.

Gracious Father, vouchsafe to me now this blessed condition, this permanent Heavenly resignation to thy divine will and to all the events of thy providence. With the blessing of Divine Providence, this shall hereafter be the great object of my life.

December 8, 1843.

CHRISTIAN DEPORTMENT.

It is necessary for me to acquire a cheerful, mild, and gentle deportment. It is thought by some that a gloomy countenance is the evidence of a pure heart, but I am of an opposite opinion. I think such an appearance is an indication of some defect, either of constitution or of religious character—it may be the result of fanaticism, and it is believed to be the direct tendency of the doctrine of fatalism or of imaginary decrees, whereby the destinies of man are supposed to be fixed irrespective of his own exertions. As the passion of anger is useful when properly directed and governed, so the natural disposition to laugh and be merry is equally important, but it must be confined to objects that are harmless. The subject requires christian education and government.

It is said of our Saviour, that he was never known even to smile.

This is an additional evidence that he was a heavenly and not an earthly being. An earthly being acquires a heavenly mind, not by a total suppression of the gifts of Providence, but by a right use of every natural faculty. Every thing belonging to man requires religious education and discipline.

It is a useful test for me, in order to ascertain whether my frame of mind is what it should be, to try the state of my affections towards men. If I find that I have no enmity, no prejudices, no fanciful likings or dislikings, towards my fellow beings, but that I breathe toward them a spirit of love, gentleness and forbearance, I am sure I am right. And while my deportment is modified and formed by such feelings, I have nothing to fear.

Gracious Father, enable me to form myself in strict accordance with the precepts of thy gospel.

December 9, 1843.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

When disappointment comes, I find it necessary to apply

forthwith to the throne of grace for resignation. And here I find relief. Nothing contributes so much to the efficacy of my prayers in this respect as a pure heart, a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

The consideration that every thing works together for good to those who love God, is precious to my soul this morning.

December 11, 1843.

SUBMISSION TO THE EVENTS OF PROVIDENCE. A PRAYER
SUITED TO MY PRESENT NECESSITIES.

Heavenly Father, thou knowest my necessities, thou knowest the desire of my heart. I therefore approach thy throne with confidence.

I thirst not for wealth, nor for a long life ; but for a pure heart, for a permanent spirit of submission and resignation to all the events of thy Providence. If there be any wicked thing, if any secret sin lurks within me, whereby the desire of my heart cannot be accomplished, O enlighten and instruct my conscience, and remove far from me every hindrance, every obstacle, that keeps me from an entire submission to thy gracious will !

Great God, for Christ's sake, vouchsafe to me now such a measure of thy grace, as may abundantly fortify and strengthen me against the manifold trials and vicissitudes of this life.

December 11, 1843, at Evening.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN DEPORTMENT.

O blessed Father, imbue my soul deeply with the divine spirit of humility and benevolence, and vouchsafe to me moderation in all my actions, in all my expressions. May I never allow myself to be so much excited as to lose the spirit of forbearance and charity. Endow me at all times hereafter with meekness and gentleness of character and deportment. And grant, O Heavenly Father, that in the expression of my opinions of men or measures, I may beware of intemperance

or excess of feeling, so that I may in all things proclaim that I have been with Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer.

Sunday, Dec. 24, 1843.

I have been sick for the last ten days; during which time I fear I have made very little progress in the divine life. I trust, however, in the mercy of God, that I have not receded therein. My prayers have been irregular and feeble; and my mind has been occupied not only with my temporal affairs, but with the infirmity of my body. Health and good spirits are best adapted to spiritual prayer; while both sickness and despondency are unfavorable thereto.

While we are in health it is the best time to press forward to the mark of the high calling, &c., for when sickness comes (although our hope may be firm,) yet our religious energies are much debilitated.

Sunday, Dec. 31, 1843.

My intellectual faculties seem to require almost continual action; when they are unemployed I am restless and uneasy. I am apprehensive that there is no safety in idleness, and consequently my peace of mind depends upon the employment of my understanding. I have proved, also, the truth of an aphorism contained in a work entitled "Aids to Reflection to Wit," that the affections can never be kept constant to an object that gives no employment to the understanding. And hence I have always found that my moral and religious improvement required the exercise of the reasoning faculties in conjunction with the prayer of the heart. By such means I have often secured constancy to the object of my solicitude.

I bless God that I can at all times, and especially when nothing else engages my attention, hold communion with the throne of grace, and thus profitably employ every moment of my life in the furtherance of my eternal interest.

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